

IN THESE TIMES

VOL. 8, NO. 31

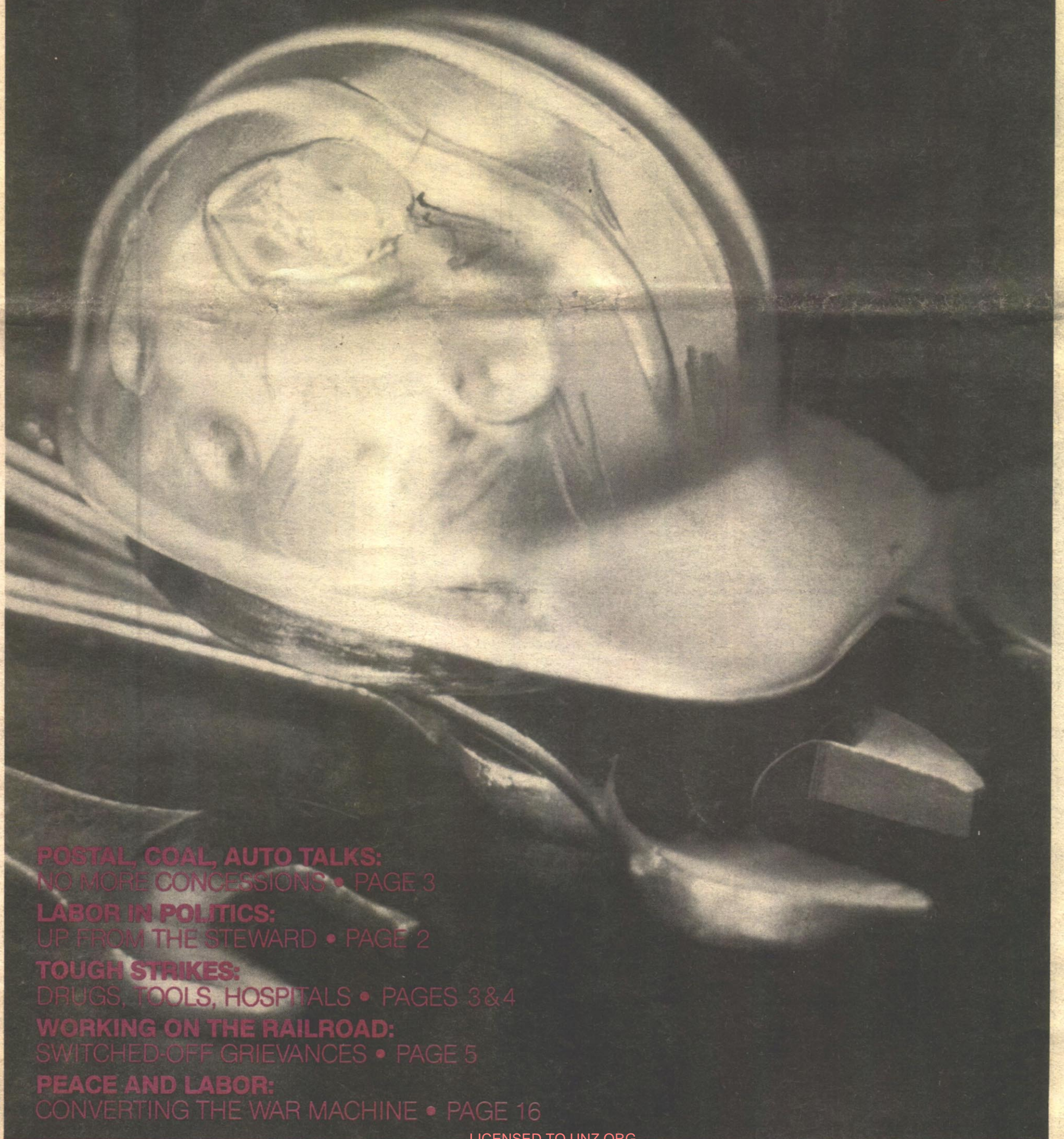
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\$1.25

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Labor rebuilds for grassroots clout

By Harold Meyerson

SAN FRANCISCO

In keeping with its changing role in American society, labor at this year's Democratic National Convention was in a peculiar position. It was a power without honor in its own party.

On the one hand, the 603 AFL-CIO delegates and the 277 from the National Education Association, along with a smattering from unaffiliated unions, comprised what CBS estimated as a full 25 percent of the convention—just 2 percent lower than labor's all-time high of 27 percent in 1980. But in 1980, of course, labor's delegates had been split between Kennedy and Carter. This year, almost all were Mondale delegates. Considering that a disproportionate share of the 562 unelected "superdelegates" were Mondale's, this meant that well over half of Mondale's elected delegates came from unions.

Nor was labor shy (though it was discreet) about using its power. Its extensive whip system (the AFL-CIO's run out of Mondale's trailer) helped keep defections on platform fights down to a minimum. Behind the scenes, union leaders lobbied against the ascension of Burt Lance to the Democratic National Committee (DNC) chair, as they had against the selection of Lloyd Bentsen as vice-presidential nominee.

And yet, this did not look or sound like a convention of a laborized Democratic Party, much less a proto-labor party. Union buttons, hats, placards were not in evidence—save for a tiny blue and gold pin, reading "Unity" that union delegates wore on their lapels. Union leaders, with the exception of the NEA's Mary Futtrell, were not on the podium with Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro during the convention's closing tableau of party unity.

More seriously, this year's Democratic platform abandoned the party's longstanding commitment to full employment and national health insurance, and this retreat was borne with equanimity by leaders of organizations that have championed these causes for decades. "I know the positions of the candidate," said United Auto Workers President Owen Bieber on the night of Walter Mondale's nomination. "If it were a different candidate, I'd be more concerned with the platform."

Weakness in strength.

In short, labor's position was one of both unprecedented strength and historic weakness. The unified endorsement worked; unions had been the single most important constituency in Walter Mondale's victory. By the same token, so narrow and bitter had that victory been, and so contentious the role that unions played, that they had little choice but to settle for their nominee and let everything else, short of a direct assault, pass by.

Whether labor and its agenda can come out of the closet in the foreseeable future, or whether they will be relegated to a more marginal position, will of course be determined in large part by the outcome of November's election. Gearing up for the election was the main item of business at the AFL-CIO's caucus of delegates, leaders and political staffers. There the AFL-CIO revealed the program whose execution in the months ahead will be the best measure of labor's willingness and capacity to change in order to survive.

Unveiled with appropriate fanfare by Lane Kirkland, and outlined by COPE Director John Perkins and Associate Director Dick Wilson, the AFL-CIO's One-on-One Program is intended to supplement the union's usual perfunctory mail and phone voter-registration campaigns with a program in which shop stewards and rank-and-file activists attempt at the worksite to register any unregistered workers whom they represent on the job.

"The One-on-One Program," Lane Kirkland told the AFL-CIO delegates, "was developed in the heat of the campaign, and was highly effective." Indeed, it was scheduled for general use (not as a voter-registration program but simply on Mondale's behalf) in the New Hampshire primary. However, it fell victim with three weeks to go to logistical problems and the overconfidence that was a periodic curse of Walter Mondale's campaign.

Fortunately, Jan Pierce, political director of the Communications Workers in the Northeast, who was the driving force behind the

Marching outside, voting inside, union members at the Democratic convention found they were politically strong—yet critically weak.

program, insisted that it be implemented by the CWA's Nashua local, where Mondale ran even with Hart while losing the labor vote elsewhere in the state. Just as fortunately, AFSCME's New York Legislative Director Ed Draves, who had been sent to implement the program in the isolated paper mill town of Berlin, never got word of the program's cancellation, and proceeded to have the mill stewards talk with their fellow workers about Mondale's candidacy. Mondale carried Berlin's paper workers overwhelmingly.

That was enough for the AFL-CIO, which after the rout of New Hampshire was in no position to quarrel with anything that brought majorities for Mondale. With considerable success, the program was implemented in the New York and Pennsylvania primaries (chiefly by the CWA, AFSCME and the Steelworkers); it was introduced and then disastrously abandoned in Ohio. By late spring, AFL-CIO COPE had determined to use the program to wage a major voter registration drive in September and the major internationals have planned massive campaigns. AFSCME, to take one example, registered 10,000 of its members in the fall of 1980; this September, says AFSCME Political Director Jerry Clark, they are targeting 100,000. "The battle for November," Perkins told the AFL-CIO caucus, "may be decided in September."

Unions unprepared.

But there is considerable question whether this is a program that most unions will be able to utilize. In many internationals, the shop stewards haven't talked politics to the workers in decades. The program was effective this spring among unions that have a history of political education and skills training.

The One-on-One Program comes out of the most politicized union in the AFL-CIO, which took it from an overtly social democratic union federation. At the Eurosociism and America Conference of December 1980, leaders of Canada's New Demo-

THE STORY INSIDERS

cratic Party and the Canadian Labor Congress explained to American union leaders how support for the party had been built by shop stewards talking with members at their worksites. Machinist President William Winpisinger liked the idea so much he made it available to IAM locals for either political or collective bargaining purposes. But the Machinists' On-the-Job Canvass is a two-way street, in which the locals' political programs emerge in response to members' answers to polls. "The national AFL-CIO left a lot out of the program," complains Donald Resha, executive vice-president of the Florida AFL-CIO, which deferred to the national AFL-CIO and did not use it in the March 13 primary.

Political staffers don't see a shop steward program as a quick fix for decades of unions' political atrophy, but as an index of unions' political development. Independent of this year's campaign, the Service Employees International Union (SEIU) is embarking on a program of placing elected shop stewards within locals—but it is a program the international does not expect to see in full effect until after several years of training and trial and error. "The steward system," says the political director of another international, "just isn't strong enough this time out. Like most unions, we are now rebuilding our steward system—but this doesn't happen overnight."

Perhaps the two most pessimistic judgments come from a veteran AFL-CIO leader and a longtime political staffer for several internationals. "It will never go," the Federation leader said of the One-on-One Program. "Nothing happens unless the business agents and shop stewards are frightened for their jobs. Only that will move them." "Local leadership," explains the political staffer, "doesn't perceive politics as part of its job. There is even some resentment at having to do politics. They understand they have to dump Reagan, but there's this inability and unwillingness to do anything about it."

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IN THESE TIMES

The Independent
Socialist Newspaper

Published 41 times a year: weekly except the first week of January, first week of March, last week of November, last week of December; bi-weekly in June through the first week in September by Institute for Public Affairs, 1300 W. Belmont, Chicago, IL 60657, (312) 472-5700.

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(ISSN 0160-5992)

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IN THESE TIMES

By David Moberg

THIS IS THE RECOVERY, ISN'T it? Now that profits are up, executive salaries are booming and economic indicators are rosier, we can forget all that unpleasantness of union concessions during the last few recession years and expect that management will share the bounty with its workers or at least be less belligerent in its relationship with unions, can't we?

It appears not. There may be some gestures of moderation from management, especially in ostentatiously profitable industries. But management remains on the offensive; unions holding the line are often forced into prolonged battles. The rationale that all workers' wages are too high has become a permanent fixture of bargaining, and management has decided to abandon any advantages it may gain from a stable, satisfied work force in favor of a harsher workplace regime. Of necessity unions have turned their attention increasingly to attempts to keep—maybe even expand—jobs in this country, especially union jobs.

Two of the key turning points in the realignment of labor relations from the era of growth to the age of austerity were the concessions in auto—long a pacesetter in the opposite direction—and the government destruction of the air controllers' union. So it is particularly interesting to see what will happen this fall as the UAW negotiates new contracts with Ford and General Motors and the postal unions confront the administration's demands for major concessions. Two weeks after the auto contract expires on September 15, the bituminous coal contracts also run out. With long, bitter strikes but ultimately only partial success, miners in the last two contracts have resisted management takeaways. With a new president and a new strategy, they, too, may alter the tone of business-labor confrontation and contribute to a recovery for the labor movement.

Political considerations.

Just as the Reagan administration's anti-union policies and the hardships of the long recession hang over these talks, giving impetus to the drive against workers' income and work environment despite the recovery, so does presidential politics enter into calculations. Unions want Reagan out, and there is the quiet but clear fear that major strikes will offer Reagan

ammunition he can use, especially given the current low estate of labor (although a few union officials claim that strikes could be turned against Reagan).

As one mineworker official said, "If we're out, and auto's in a mess, and the postal workers took a leap into the machine guns, it could be dramatic. If I were running Reagan's campaign, I could probably turn that into 'a vote for Mondale is a vote for labor chaos.' But my instincts are that it's not going to happen."

Election-year considerations may raise the strike threshold a little, but union leaders—at least in coal and auto—seem to be calculating that the companies want

stabilized labor relations. But by shifting attention more to job and union security, the unions are challenging managerial flexibility and jealously guarded prerogatives. They are not likely to concede anything meaningful easily.

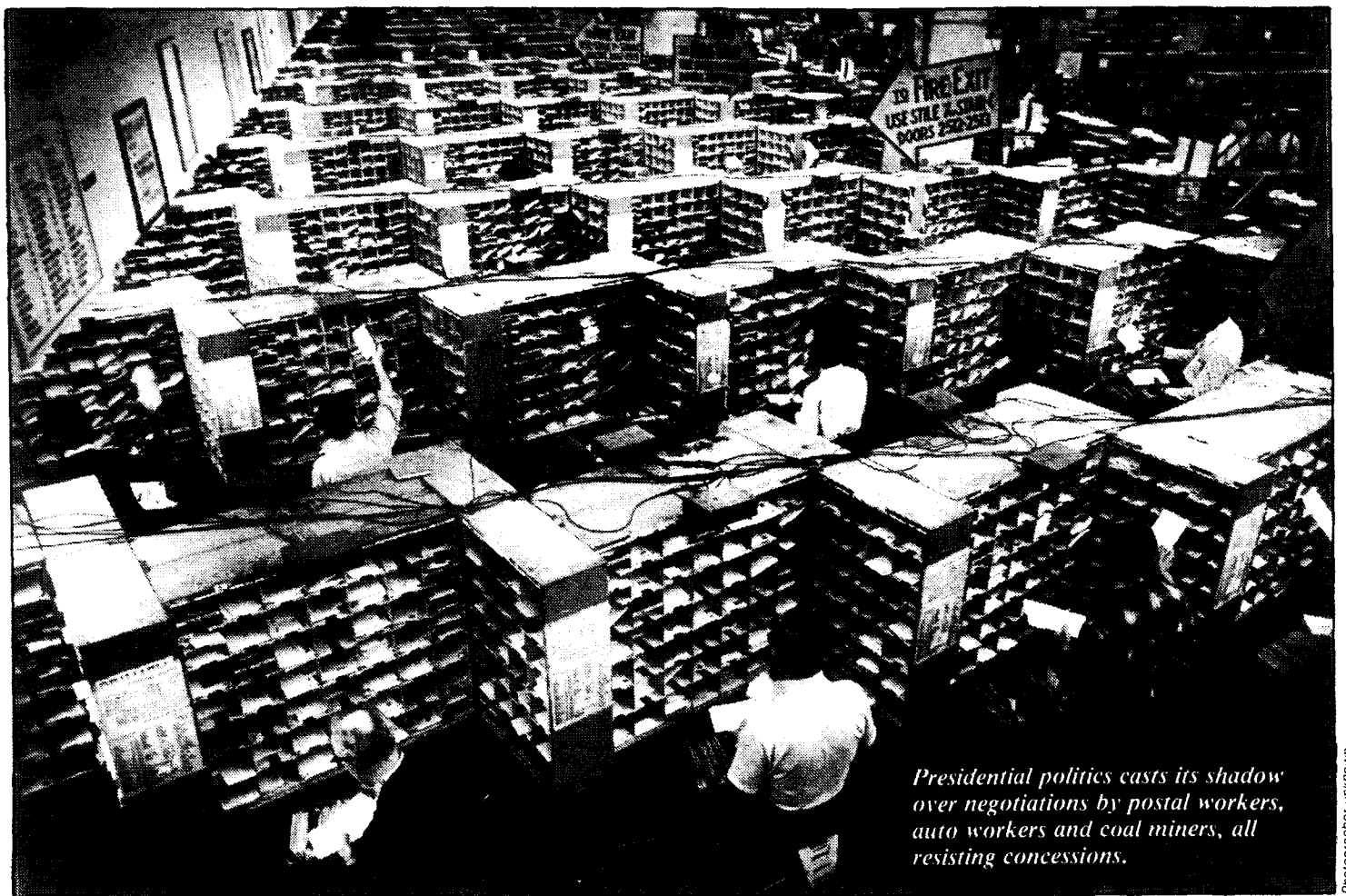
In many smaller scale negotiations, the management attacks have been unrestrained: Danly Manufacturing (see accompanying story) and Merck pharmaceuticals (see page 4) are simply two examples of attempts to weaken drastically, or destroy, well-established unions covering skilled workers in Eastern and Midwestern labor strongholds. In many cases, companies face profitable futures but still

want concessions, especially lower wages for newly hired workers.

That is also the centerpiece of the demands by the Postal Service. Despite productivity growing by 3.5 percent annually and two years of operating in the black, the Postal Service insisted on freezing basic wages, reducing night-shift premiums and cost-of-living protection, and cutting sick leave. Most significantly, it wanted to cut wages by one-third for all new workers as well as reduce their time off. The Postal Workers—APWU—and the Letter Carriers, making up most of the 600,000 postal employees, wanted

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Unions seek job security, but bosses still want cutbacks



Presidential politics casts its shadow over negotiations by postal workers, auto workers and coal miners, all resisting concessions.

Danly ripped up contract: 'They missed nothing.'

It's been hard for the 1,000 workers employed by Danly Machine Corporation during the past few years. As a high-quality maker of giant presses, mainly used by the automobile industry, Danly's orders have been slim. Earlier this year 600 were still on layoff, many for more than two years. In recent months business picked up dramatically. Large new orders from General Motors and Chrysler could have put everyone back to work. But since last May 1 Danly workers, skilled machinists who belong to a Steelworkers local, have been on strike to defend their contract against a broad-scale assault by the company.

"I've never had to deal with anything like this," says Joe Romano, the local union president who has long fought for greater militancy and democracy in the union. "They came with proposals taking away everything we've had in the contract for 40 years—holidays, pension, medical benefits, wages, work rules, everything. They missed nothing at all."

Two years ago family-owned Danly was bought out by the New York-based Ogden Corp., a \$1.7 billion conglomerate concentrated in service and security operations. Three years ago Ogden broke

a strike at its Yuba heat transfer factory in Arizona with replacement workers.

Danly management has relied on a security force, bolstered by 15-25 off-duty Chicago police toting guns, to intimidate strikers and keep strike breakers coming into the plant. "It's had a terribly deterring effect on morale and given the company a hell of a psychological weapon," Steelworker international representative Ed Sadlowski said. "And that's where we're at. It's a test of wills." Despite pleas, pickets and a lawsuit, Mayor Harold Washington and his police chief have not been willing to prohibit the police work, even though all they need to do is show "good cause" why police should not be used in labor disputes.

In late July the company began hiring "permanent replacements," adding to the foremen and union members—mainly those who had been laid off a long time—who had crossed the picket line. Roughly 100 workers are violating the strike, but the strikers know that their skills and experience are critical to Danly's success. Ogden has also retained Hill and Knowlton, a public relations firm (that once had Idi Amin as a client), and a notorious anti-union law firm, Seyfarth, Shaw, Fairweather and Ger-

aldson.

The new Danly managers wanted a two-tier wage system that would start workers at \$5 to \$6 below the \$12.50 average wage now paid and keep them \$3 an hour below even at the top, Romano says. (Later the differential was reduced.) They wanted to transfer and temporarily to lay off workers without regard for seniority, reduce union representation, and set up a new classification system that would undermine seniority. Danly proposed a three-tier wage freeze, elimination of cost-of-living protection, cuts in medical benefits and fewer holidays. For the average worker it would mean \$40-\$50 less per week, the union calculated. "Everything they did backed us into a corner, a horrible corner," Romano says. In response, workers voted 617 to 19 to strike (showing strong strike support even from those laid off).

Danly offered to show the union the books. Romano declined, partly because he distrusted the figures offered, partly because he knew all too well times had been bad—just as they aren't now. "We're paying the price for yesterday no matter what happens tomorrow," he said. "They have more orders than they know what to do with." If the company is worried about being competitive with the Japanese, Romano says, the first remedy should be finding comparably low-interest financing, not cutting workers' wages.

Chief steward Ray Navarro said that Danly not only refused to discuss union

proposals but also insisted that only the wording, not the substance, of management demands could be altered. "It's like saying, 'How do you want to die?'" he said. "Shall I poison or shoot you?"

It's been nine years since the last strike at Danly. "Last time you could get food stamps, a part-time job, so you could sustain it better," Romano said. "Now the company is able to get to them a little more. They don't see light at the end of the tunnel, and then with the threat of their job getting taken away, they get nervous." Weekly union meetings and rallies have helped keep up morale, and recently the Steelworkers hired the Kamber Group to start a corporate campaign against Ogden.

But Ogden also seems ready to fight. The Chrysler order was shifted to a licensee in Italy. The company sends letters to workers and calls them at home repeatedly to get them to break the strike. There have been tense confrontations on the picket line, especially when the off-duty cops have taunted workers or brandished guns, as union members charge they have done. (One cop was arrested by Cicero police for assault and battery against a striker.) One Saturday night in late July Romano was attacked by a few toughs, including a well-known gang member, who smashed his car before police apprehended them. There is no proof that it was strike-related, "but I sure couldn't figure anything else out, unless I'm too tall," Romano says.

—D.M.

INSHORT

Archbishop asks for Grace

Arturo Cruz got a hero's welcome from an anti-Sandinista crowd when he returned from Washington, D.C., to Nicaragua last month (see story page 9), but within the country Managua Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo is emerging as *de facto* opposition leader. That image was bolstered by an embarrassing memo published in the *National Catholic Reporter*, detailing a meeting between Obando and executives of W.R. Grace and Co. The memo outlined the archbishop's anti-Sandinista organizing work—which is more extensive than he has publicly acknowledged—and recounted his requests for Grace and Co.'s assistance for those efforts. The memo's release caused a furor in Nicaragua, since Grace's landholdings and investments in Latin America—and support for its friendly dictatorships—have made it a bitter enemy of liberation movements throughout the region. Corporate head J. Peter Grace, a prominent Catholic and close Reagan associate, was head of the CIA-influenced American Institute for Free Labor Development in the '60s, which became a tool of covert U.S. action, including the 1964 Brazilian coup.

According to the internal memo, Obando's anti-government efforts include organizing Sandinista opponents into diocesan units for religious' health and "leadership" (?) training. Obando boasted according to Grace executive John Meehan, that his "development plan" to thwart the Marxist-Leninist policies of the Sandinistas "is the country's most effective opposition. But interestingly, the Grace family foundation has so far only responded with rosary beads, Bibles and other religious materials, according to the memo—hardly the tools to mount an anti-Sandinista insurrection. Despite the conspiratorial overtones of a Grace-Obando alliance, at least one knowledgeable Catholic observer thinks the outcome will be insignificant: "I think there's less here than meets the eye."

Cuomo's appealing

New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, who upstaged Walter Mondale in San Francisco, was upended by a New York State Supreme Court Judge in his attempt to require state employees to facilitate voter registration in their offices. Cuomo's executive order, supported by the New York Civil Liberties Union, the League of Women Voters and a coalition of voter registration groups, was ruled beyond the authority of the governor—voter registration is the domain of the legislature, according to Judge Harold Hughes. New York's Democrat-controlled Assembly had passed a bill similar to Cuomo's order, but it was blocked by the Republican-dominated Senate.

The July 9 order required employees of state motor vehicles, employment and social service offices to provide mail-in voter registration forms to their clients. State Republicans sought an immediate injunction, claiming Cuomo was "using his title and his Democratic employees to enroll Democrats with taxpayer money," according to the *New York Times*. The Human SERVE Fund, which coordinates voter registration in public offices in some 20 states nationally, says the court decision won't upset its New York program. In other states Human SERVE coordinates public employees registering their clients, but in New York the organization staffs public offices with volunteers. "The decision means the process is not institutionalized, that the responsibility for registering voters is on individuals and volunteers, not the government," notes Human SERVE's Cindy Williams. Cuomo plans to appeal the judge's ruling, but no reversal can be expected in time to affect the November election.

More secrets

Public criticism forced President Reagan to back down on a proposed executive order imposing secrecy agreements on federal employees with high-level security clearances, which would have required they submit their writings to government censors for the rest of their lives. But more than 120,000 employees have already signed such lifetime agreements, according to a recently released General Accounting Office (GAO) report. Government censors have been busier under the Reagan administration, the report revealed: they reviewed 22,504 books, articles, speeches and other writings in 1983, up from 14,143 in 1979. More materials were censored in the Defense Department than anywhere else, but the CIA, National Security Agency and Justice Department were not included in the GAO survey.

Be prepared

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) takes pride in readying young men for all life's challenges, including, it seems, nuclear energy. "If you are to fulfill your pioneer role in this atomic age, you will need to understand atomic energy," notes the BSA's Atomic Energy Merit Badge booklet, written to help young Scouts earn the atomic badge. But it appears the badge prepares the Scouts to be little more than nuclear energy propagandists, since it highlights the atom's peaceful uses and "good qualities," and minimizes the danger of radiation, nuclear waste, weapons proliferation and nuclear holocaust. Critical Mass Energy Project has begun a letter-writing campaign to protest the "half-truths and propaganda" in the merit badge training, and urge people to complain to J.L. Tarr, BSA President, Irving, Texas 75060. Campaign organizer Sam Totten, it should be noted, was an Eagle Scout.

—Joan Walsh



Sophisticated union campaign counters Merck's hard line

Multinational Merck & Co., the leading ethical drug company in the U.S., has prospered and expanded in recent years. But that didn't stop the company from demanding major concessions in contract negotiations last spring, breaking with a long, paternalistic tradition and resulting in a lockout and strike by 3,800 employees.

Merck may have underestimated the will of its workers and their unions, primarily Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. In a highly automated industry, where management is keeping much of the plant running while workers strike, the unions are resisting with a sophisticated campaign to gain public support in the U.S. and overseas, to build union morale and to seek weak points in the corporate battlements.

Even before the contract expired last April 30, workers at the seven U.S. Merck plants had been well prepared by company newsletters making the case for cutbacks in the union contract. But a younger, more "progressive" union leadership at the 800-worker Rahway, N.J., factory had also been doing its work, sending out weekly union newsletters, holding a two-day educational meeting for the executive board and bargaining committee and distributing a clear, hard-hitting pamphlet on "Merckonomics"—prepared with the help of the Labor Institute of New York—to all Merck workers.

Union leaders were not surprised by the company demands: establishment of a new two-tier wage system that would hire new workers at less than \$12 an hour compared with the average pay

of \$15.10 an hour, decreased medical benefits for all workers, a wage freeze, and restrictions on transfers and work rule changes that the union believed threatened job security. By contrast the union asked only for a 3 percent pay increase and indicated workers would freeze their pay if management did likewise (Merck's chief executive hiked his pay 56 percent last year).

With possibly half the Rahway plant retiring within the next five years, the two-tier proposal is especially threatening. "It would not only lower the standard of living, but it's also a union-busting tactic and a way to circumvent the affirmative action program," chief steward Paul Renner said. In right-to-work states, it might make it harder to get lower-paid workers to join the union.

When the contract expired, the unions at first decided not to strike. A few days later, however, management locked out the Rahway workers rather than risk a slowdown. A month later all of the other unions went out on strike, and since then only a handful of workers have crossed the picket line to return.

Union members have ammunition to defend themselves, thanks to the educational work. Although Merck ranked 125 in sales on the Fortune 500, it was 13 in profits per employee, earning it \$450 million in profits in 1983, topping slightly its five-year average of 22.8 percent return on equity. Wage rates are roughly comparable to similar industries, and union wages made up only 5 percent of total corporate costs. Worker productivity was up, but the company

was nevertheless rapidly expanding in Puerto Rico, western Europe and Japan.

But the company wasn't listening to those arguments. "The company took a very strident approach to bargaining," Renner said. "They insisted on concessions. They refused to even talk about our proposals. Here's a company making profits off health products, and they are trying to cut our health benefits."

The union took out ads in local newspapers, conducted union meetings over radio station WBAI, collected pro-union signatures on a petition from local merchants, solicited support for attacks on Merck's drug pricing policies from Public Citizen and the Citizen Action network, held rallies with local politicians and presidential candidate Jesse Jackson and organized support from other unions. The Merck union council has decided to launch a corporate campaign against Merck and its corporate and banking allies. Local President Joe Anderson recently returned from a trip to Ireland, England, Belgium and Holland to develop ties with—and seek support from—European Merck employees as a first step toward multinational union bargaining.

"We feel the strike is no longer a strategy in itself," Renner said. "It's part of a larger strategy. As Joe Anderson says, 'You're not going to win by running around with a piece of paper on the end of a stick.'"

—David Moberg

White Paper draft changes

WASHINGTON—State Department officials finally released the delayed report, "Nicaragua's Military Build-Up and Support for Central American Subversion" (ITT, July 11). The version of the report officially released July 18 contains significant differences from the draft originally circulated to Congress and reporters.

After receiving an official complaint from the office of Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE), the quotation citing Biden was removed. Biden charged that the quote attributed to him was taken "out of context," according to the Associated Press. The report quoted Biden saying in a June 18 Senate speech that "the accumulation of intelligence information does show that Nicaragua is deeply involved in providing arms, command and control support and safe haven to Salvadoran guerrilla groups." Biden complained that the citation ignored other parts of his speech pointing out that "at times, mere bits or pieces or shreds of intelligence in-

SYLVIA



by Nicole Hollander



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formation have been all there was to back up vast claims by the president" about the source of Central American unrest and that the U.S. intelligence process had become "highly politicized."

The original draft also referred to a *Washington Post* report that Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto in March 1982 commented that "Nicaragua was involved in the arms flow to Salvadoran guerrillas, but denied that a 'substantial' arms flow existed." The draft report ignored a key phrase that appears in the final version. D'Escoto had added in his statement to the *Post* that the Nicaraguan government had not "authorized" the arms flow.

Most importantly, the final draft retracts the original assessment of the extent of arms flow between the two countries. The draft states that the arms flow from November 1980 to January 1981 was "heavy... Since then, except for special periods when new guerrilla units were being equipped or immediately before a major offensive, the flow has been sporadic. Ammunition, medicines, clothing—rather than weapons—often make up the bulk of the shipments." The report was changed to state that there has been a "sporadic increase" in the movement of weapons, and "there has been a steady flow of ammunition, explosives, medicines and clothing" (emphasis added).

By removing the quotation by Biden and qualifying the citation of D'Escoto, the State Department admitted that it had distorted the intention of the speakers and quoted them out of context. But no justification was offered for the new charge of a "sporadic increase" in weapons flow and a "steady flow" of ammunition. The three changes only further undermined the report's already minimal credibility.

—Joy Hackel

Hospital strike breaks record

NEW YORK—Striking workers demanding a 10 percent wage increase have been picketing 27 private non-profit hospitals in New York since July 13, when their union rejected a much smaller management offer. The strike has already surpassed the 11-day 1976 walkout to become the city's longest hospital strike. On July 16, workers from 14 nursing homes joined the picket lines, bringing the total of striking hospital workers to 49,500. All are members of District 1199 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union, AFL-CIO.

The management offer reportedly came after the extended strike deadline and was presented to a press conference at the same time it was delivered in writing to union bargainers. While the July 14 *New York Times* front page headlines proclaimed that the union had rejected an 8 percent offer (over the two-year contract), Doris Turner, 1199 president, says the offer from the League of Voluntary Hospitals really amounts to about 2.3 percent in the first year. Under the league proposal, no wage increase would take effect until Oc-

tober 1, a full three months after the June 30 contract expiration. The hospitals would pay for the wage increase by taking back current contributions to training and pension funds.

In addition to wages, the union and the league are at loggerheads over scheduled time off. New York hospital workers were guaranteed one weekend off in four under the old contract; the union now wants every other weekend off. Although management is willing to agree to 26 weekends off per year, it reserves the right to schedule them. The league has proposed \$20 premium pay for every weekend worked above the 26.

Observers and participants in the strike agree that the central obstacle to a settlement is how the hospitals will pay for it. The league maintains that the hospitals cannot afford to offer more than they already have. Some say that if the state would step in and increase the amounts of the hospitals' Medicaid and Medicare reimbursements, an agreement could likely be reached. But the State Department of Health maintains that its reimbursement system already has an inflation factor to cover wage increases. Department spokesman Peter Slocum told the press on July 23 that the reimbursement system now includes a 6.5 percent inflation factor for this year and a 6.2 inflation factor for next year. In Slocum's view, the hospitals are getting enough "to offer a reasonable settlement with the union."

District 1199 spokesman Bob Carroll charges that in the past the hospitals have taken more from the state in wage increase reimbursements than they have paid out to their workers. Hospital workers received an 8 percent increase in 1980, but the state gave the hospitals a 9.8 percent increase in reimbursements for labor costs, according to Carroll. In 1981, the state granted a labor cost reimbursement increase of 8.1 percent, but workers received a wage boost of only 7.5 percent. Using Slocum's figures for what the state has already agreed to pay in wage increases for the next two years, the hospitals would be receiving nearly 13 percent more from the state while paying their workers less than an 8 percent wage increase.

"We don't have a contract with the state, and we don't have a contract with Gov. Cuomo," says Carroll. The dispute remains with the managements of the hospitals, and the union claims that those managements have been rewarding themselves handsomely while bargaining hard with low-paid workers. Hospital management salaries run up to \$184,000, and pay raises for managers have been as high as 27 percent per year, according to District 1199 President Turner.

When 1199 held its first strike 25 years ago, hospital workers received poverty-level wages. The union has succeeded in raising the wage levels, so that, under the old contract, salaries ranged from \$15,247 to \$33,962. Members of 1199 include lab technicians, nurses, orderlies, housekeepers and porters. The membership is predominantly female, black and Latino.

—Jack Clark

Briefing: In Amtrak conflict, all tracks are leading to Washington

CHICAGO—A major management scandal at Amtrak has led congressional investigators from Chicago to the company's Washington headquarters. Sources close to the investigation say they have uncovered a corporate conspiracy to rig the company's disciplinary appeals process, corrupting the procedures established under the Railway Labor Act.

At a protest rally of 125 Amtrak workers at Operation PUSH July 26 in Chicago, dissident supervisor Dan DeMarco denounced the company's decision to relocate three management officials from Chicago after the scandal first broke. DeMarco accused Amtrak President Graham Claytor of playing a "game of chess, shuffling bad actors around when these are the very people he should be firing."

In Chicago alone, 250 to 300 individuals have filed complaints about unjust discipline, said a spokesman for U.S. Rep. Cardiss Collins of Chicago. Some of the cases also involve allegations of race, age, sex and religious discrimination. Collins sent word to the rally that a

ishments handed out by local hearing officers. Railroad labor law requires that appeals officers make scrupulous reviews of such decisions to make sure evidence is substantial, that the hearings were fair and impartial and that punishment is commensurate with the violation.

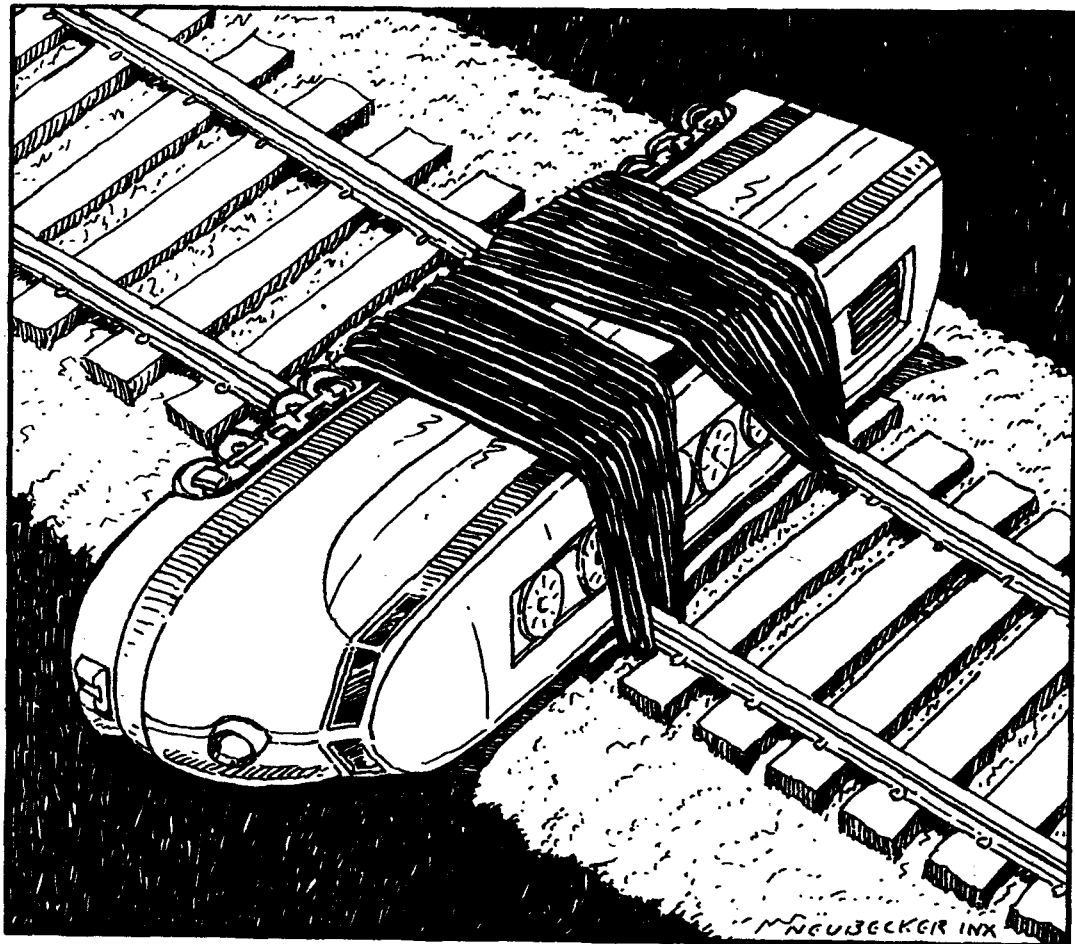
Amtrak workers, realizing that the lengthy company appeals process rarely overturned any local decisions, became prey to company officers who offered deals for "leniency" and "waivers." Family breadwinners, out of work for months awaiting the appeals, were coerced into signing confessions, waiving their rights to back pay or to a final appeal before a public law board, according to the spokesman.

One of the workers who spoke out at the PUSH rally was Chan Hiwani, an electrician. Hiwani said he was isolated by four men in the foreman's office and told not to contact his union because that would be insubordination. Held out of service, shadowed by Amtrak police whenever he came on company property, Hiwani said witnesses were in-

tions, food service speed-ups in which two cooks and two or three waiters are serving up to twice as many people as five cooks and six waiters used to serve, and new on-board "Train Chiefs" paid \$30,000 a year to make detailed written records on each worker, when more workers were desperately needed.

Other departments such as maintenance, commissary, station services and reservations have also suffered under a military-style management. An aide for Rep. Charles Hayes (D-IL) said when cases started pouring into his office, he found them "unbelievable" for the "Gestapo tactics" and "depth of discrimination" they revealed. An attorney for PUSH said it appears Amtrak has a "revolving door policy when it comes to minorities" receiving promotions: they work three years, then they're out.

Just who the "high officials" were directing the conspiracy has not been revealed, but all eyes at Amtrak are on G.F. Daniels, vice president for labor relations, C.B. Thomas, corpor-



hearing of her transportation oversight subcommittee, originally scheduled for July 30 in Chicago, had been rescheduled for September 13 in Washington because her investigators "obtained company documents showing that high officials knew what was going on in Chicago." Indeed, Collins' spokesman says the evidence indicates that corporate officers directed the conspiracy and that similar cases are emerging from other cities.

According to the subcommittee source, the conspirators rigged the disciplinary appeals system by directing regional and national level labor relations officers to rubber stamp nearly all disciplinary decisions and pun-

timidated not to testify in his favor. When he was fired, the dismissal notice was posted on a public bulletin board for more than a week. To get his job back, Hiwani said he had to waive his EEOC rights.

Amtrak's predominantly black on-board service workers have taken the worst abuse. Porters, cooks, waiters, bartenders and stewards have endured a two-year reign of terror: humiliating suitcase searches, ostensibly for alcohol or drugs, but also for food (workers on board are required to eat only the company's high-sodium, high-sugar food), pressure on old-timers to take early retirement, many investigations and severe punishments for minor infrac-

ate director of labor relations, Eugene Eden, vice president of passenger services, Frank Forcione, general manager of passenger services—and on President Claytor himself. Claytor has already been given demands from the subcommittee to fire all the conspirators, redress injustices to those wronged and establish procedural safeguards to prevent new abuses.

In fiscal 1984, Amtrak is receiving \$716 million in federal subsidies. The congressional investigation has tamed Chicago's managers for the time being, but the word seems to be slow getting out to the West Coast. Union officials say "Amscam" is still running full steam ahead in Los Angeles.

—Phil Milton

IN THE NATION

CAMPAIGN '84

Hispanic "spoilers" raise issues that will not go away



By Cecilio J. Morales Jr.

WASHINGTON

OLYMPIAN EDITORIALISTS and establishment politicians discovered in July that the Hispanic constituency and its major issue—immigration reform—won't go away in time to keep the presidential campaign tidy. For their part, Hispanics began to realize that 1984 may well be the year their political status takes a turn for the better.

Nothing illustrated all this better than the Washington operetta of the last week of July, when 1,000 Hispanics came to the annual convention of the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), only to be greeted by a chorus that sounded like Gilbert and Sullivan. Normally a quiet affair that goes unnoticed by all but the inner core of Hispanic politicians, the NCLR found itself wooed by Vice President George Bush, Sen. Alan Simpson (R-WY) and House Democratic Leaders Thomas P. O'Neill (D-MA) and James Wright (D-TX). All of them seemed to want nothing more than to avoid blame in Hispanic eyes for the Simpson-Mazzoli bill that grants a limited amnesty to illegal immigrants but cracks down on most immigration with potentially discriminatory measures that threaten all Hispanics (see *In These Times*, June 13).

"If the president intended to oppose the bill, [O'Neill] would not have put it on the agenda, forcing many Democrats to vote for it," Wright said, in a convoluted, unconvincing explanation of Democratic votes for Simpson-Mazzoli. The White House also exhibited its own forked tongue. Bush told the NCLR gathering that Reagan would "oppose a bill that discriminates against Hispanics," but no spokesman interpreted the vice president's words as a pledge to veto the bill.

The major newspapers, however, took the bull by the horns. The *New York Times* called the Hispanics "spoilers" for opposing the immigration bill, while the *Washington Post* theorized that Hispanic organizations taking that position only "purportedly" represent their members. If only the Hispanics would go away and

stop rocking the boat, these observers imply, both Democrats and Republicans up for election could avoid promises to vote against the Simpson-Mazzoli legislation, especially since they apparently favor the law.

Hispanics here to stay.

Hispanics have not only grown as a voting bloc, but also gained political maturity as an organized constituency. That, like the emergence of blacks and women as electoral political forces, promises lasting changes.

The U.S. census of 1980 counted 14.6 million Hispanics—although many Hispanic organizations believe the correct figure is between 17 and 20 million. Most are of Mexican-American, Puerto Rican and Cuban extraction. The estimated six million potential Hispanic voters are concentrated in five key electoral states: California, Florida, Illinois, New York and Texas. In the last presidential election close to 3.5 million Hispanics cast votes.

In 1983, Gov. Toney Anaya of New Mexico called together local, state and national Hispanic leaders to form Hispanic Force '84. The group planned to register one million new Hispanic voters. So far, according to Andy Hernandez of the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project (SWVREP) in San Antonio, about half that figure has been added to voter rolls. Those 4.5 million votes could be decisive in a close election.

Inspired by Jesse Jackson's campaign, many Hispanics want a more aggressive style and a clear agenda for the new Hispanic bloc. "Hispanic votes used to be picked like ripe tomatoes by the national organizers. Those old enough to remember the Depression voted automatically for the party of FDR; while those younger always voted for Kennedy, 'the saint,'" William Velazquez, the founder of SWVREP, told *In These Times*. Now there's a demand to be taken seriously when it comes to issues.

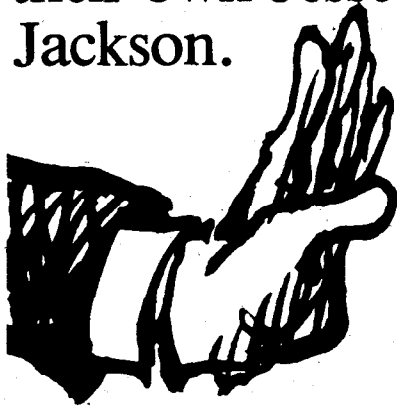
Hispanic politics gained clout and urgency this year with the combination of a presidential election and the debate on immigration, "an easy issue to organize around, since it is likely to affect the vast majority of the Hispanic community," according to NCLR policy analyst

Charles Kamasake. Equally important, but a bit less emotional, is the renewal of expiring bilingual education programs. Renewal legislation passed the House but still faces an uphill battle among Senate Republicans, who—conveniently forgetting that the programs are meant to teach English—fan the fears of a Spanish language takeover in the U.S.

The Reagan-induced recession, still acutely felt by discouraged Hispanic youth and women, whose combined unemployment and underemployment rates run at 46.4 and 69 percent respectively, also inspires Hispanic political action. There is very little that Reagan can say to calm Hispanic fears about his second term. "I just don't believe he has our needs in mind," said Kim Ramirez, an Oakland bank employee attending the NCLR meeting.

Nationalities that previously went separate ways are now unifying on some issues. Mexican-Americans do not want to be carded every time they apply for a job, but even the Cubans—who so far have been largely Reagan's Hispanic cheering section—complain that Republicans have not moved the 1980 Marielitos on the path to citizenship to strengthen the south Florida Cuban voting bloc. Juan Carrera, a Puerto Rican shopkeep-

What Hispanics lack most at this point is their own Jesse Jackson.



er from San Francisco, said, "To them, we all look alike. Why, I know of Puerto Ricans who have preferred the bus ride to Mexico to the hassle of convincing immigration agents that they are U.S. citizens."

Many Hispanics question whether their leadership and organizations are ready for a big push for political power. Only four or five of the 90 national Hispanic groups have significant political strength, having weathered internal disputes, loss of funds and the change from being vitriolic outsiders to savvy operators working under adverse conditions in the political mainstream. In addition to NCLR, which functions more as a think tank—an Hispanic Brookings—the League of United Latin American Citizens (LU-LAC) has risen to become the top lobbying group, while the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) has become a successful litigator in landmark welfare and immigration rights cases.

What Hispanics lack most at this point is their own Jesse Jackson to broker with blacks, often perceived as a more powerful constituency. Like the black movement, which spawned Martin Luther King Jr., the Hispanics have in Cesar Chavez a charismatic leader with broad appeal. But Chavez has obstinately refused to go beyond farmworker issues, despite repeated calls to do so.

Among the politicians, the field is nearly barren. On the far right are Reagan's token appointees, such as Nestor Sanchez, assistant secretary of defense, an impassioned advocate of interventionism in Central America. More to the center would be Rep. Kika de la Garza (D-TX), who for many years has preferred to "play along to get along" rather than take a stand as a Hispanic. Last June he was a firm supporter of the temporary worker provision in Simpson-Mazzoli, labeled a "rent-a-slave" program by Rep. Henry B. Gonzalez (D-TX).

Gonzalez himself, who rode on the plane to Dallas with President Kennedy, represents the liberal Hispanics whose oratory consists of retread New Deal and New Frontier. Like Rep. Robert Garcia (D-NY), former chairman of the 11-member Hispanic congressional caucus, he had to be dragged into action against the immigration bill last December by a cadre of lobbyists led by LU-LAC's Executive Director Arnold Torres, who later wrote an alternative immigration bill for Rep. Edward Roybal (D-CA). These representatives have now discovered a good thing, however, and are firm on that issue.

Perhaps the only plausible contender for national leader at the moment is Gov. Anaya, a labor-backed Democrat who won his first term in an electoral upset in New Mexico in 1982. Anaya is a short and wiry man in his early 40s who has, like Gary Hart, cultivated the Kennedy haircut and smile. His jetsetting across the country to speak to "his constituency" has earned him good-natured ribbing in his state. "Toney Come Home," says a popular New Mexico bumpersticker. On substance, however, Anaya has repeatedly produced solid responses to the Reagan economic program and passable critiques of Central America policy. He was speaking about immigration before most of his colleagues. Jokes notwithstanding, with a little momentum, Anaya could angle for a Ferraro-style jump to the Democratic ticket in 1988.

Attempts by Anaya and his younger fellow-aspirant Henry Cisneros, mayor of San Antonio, to develop their national leadership roles have pre-empted serious moves by Hispanics toward Jackson's proposed Rainbow Coalition. The idea is popular. Indeed, in several cities youthful high school clubs with Hispanic and black members have named their groups after Jackson's dream. But Hispanic powerbrokers appear to prefer strengthening their hand before negotiating a part in a multi-racial alliance. As one prominent Hispanic activist says privately, "There's time. We intend to be around."

Cecilio J. Morales Jr. is assistant editor of COHA's *Washington Report on the Hemisphere*.

By Diana Johnstone

P A R I S

AFTER WITHERING AT THE grassroots and losing at the polls, the French left has now been dropped from the government. For the new cabinet headed by Laurent Fabius is not yet centrist, but it is no longer left. It is all Mitterrand. What that means, only Mitterrand knows.

Outgoing Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy, a lifelong Socialist of working-class origins and mayor of the textile city of Lille, embodied the "union of the left" and the "sociological majority" that Francois Mitterrand claimed had become the political majority with his election three years ago. But times and majorities are changing fast. Having to explain why social change had to be slowed down in favor of economic rigor, in his old-fashioned oratorical style mixing limp lyricism with ineffective rhetoric against the right, Mauroy had become a parody of the futility of good intentions. This image is now stuck on socialism and the left in France, probably for some time to come.

Incoming Prime Minister Laurent Fabius, 38, learned show jumping from his American mother and bought his expensive Latin Quarter apartment with part of the money his upper-class family got for selling a Georges de la Tour painting to the National Gallery in Washington. The upper classes can feel reassured: the French government is back in the hands, if not of the right, at least of the right people.

Mitterrand's previous cabinets were put together to give balanced shares to all sectors of the left and the various factions within the Socialist Party. Communist Party participation was based on a written policy accord with the Socialist Party. After the disastrous European Parliamentary elections, the Communists and even the Socialists seem to have lost all bargaining power. Mitterrand has a free hand to use the power of the presidency to try to create a new center left able to survive the 1986 legislative elections. This task has been given to the aristocratic young technocrat Fabius, who had won Mitterrand's confidence by verbally cutting down the Socialist Party's rival barons, Michel Rocard and Jean-Pierre Chevenement. At the 1979 Party congress, Mitterrand sent Fabius in for the kill against Rocard. Rocard had praised the free market as the safeguard against the "gulag." "Between the free market and the gulag there is socialism!" retorted Fabius to wild applause from the Socialist militants.

Such verbal hijinx now look like the wild oats that some well-bred young men sow in their youth. In his first speech to the Assembly as prime minister, Fabius put all such contentiousness—and all reference to "socialism"—behind him. He promised "tolerance" and "courtesy." Right-wing party leaders were not ready to take him up on this. They are still befuddled from being deprived of their "socio-communist" hate target. But the television-watching public, fed up with rancorous and futile quarrels between "right" and "left," may welcome a new style of centrist moderation. This, anyway, is Mitterrand's gamble.

Fabius' new approach.

In an allusion to the European elections and to the massive demonstrations against the Mauroy government's education bill, Fabius promised to listen to the wishes of the people. His first pronouncement: "The state has reached its limits. It must go beyond them." Economic liberalism is henceforth to be justified by *vox populi*, as well as by the imperative need to modernize the country.

For their part, the Communists went out not with a bang but a whimper. After months of public speculating on when and how it would leave the government coalition, the French Communist Party (PCF) didn't even manage to "fall to the left." It gave no clear meaning to its departure. It just fell flat. George Marchais rushed home from his vacation (in Rumania) for some botched negotiations with

Fabius, whereupon the PCF said it was leaving the government but staying in the majority in Parliament. Marchais then returned to Rumania.

Whither Mitterrand?

Mitterrand is so secretive that what now looks like tactical improvisation may eventually be interpreted as strategic direction. An editorial by Claude Imbert in the conservative weekly *Le Point* pointed to such long-range coherence. "French-style socialism, born of the unnatural alliance of Communists and Socialists, brought Mitterrand to power, just as French Algeria installed de Gaulle in the Elysee Palace," wrote Imbert. In both cases, the Presidents proved ready to turn against the political force that brought

A surprise in the new cabinet is the return of the leader of the Socialist Party's left-wing faction, Jeane Pierre Chevenement, in the seemingly unenviable post of education minister. This appointment was immediately reassuring to the powerful teachers' union, FEN, which has been worried about Mitterrand's backing away from the left commitment to strengthen the public school system. However, Chevenement, although stigmatized by the right as a far leftist, considered the school issue badly handled and will probably try to calm the quarrel between public and parochial schools by shifting emphasis to the need to modernize education.

The appointment of Chevenement, known as the champion of coalition with the Communists and a voluntaristic state

uniquely French tradition of left patriotism. He inherits from his predecessor Savary an agreement with Defense Minister Charles Hernu to collaborate in treating military subjects in the schools.

Chevenement's fellow CERES faction member Edwige Avice has been transferred from responsibility for sports and youth to a top post at the Defense Ministry where she will be in charge of military education and the integration of women into the armed forces.

In his first speech, Prime Minister Fabius stressed his great desire to build a unified European Community. "European construction is an indispensable way to consolidate our independence from the superpowers," he said.

This "independence" is being more or less discreetly promoted behind the scenes by American officials and ex-officials (such as Henry Kissinger) as the best way to build a strong European military-industrial complex that can help defend "Western interests" in the world and be a good customer for American military technology. West German leaders have shrewdly decided to let the French seem to run the show. Former Chancellor Helmut Schmidt has openly called for "Europe to be led by France" and expressed the hope that this leadership would include extending France's "nuclear umbrella" to the protection of West Germany. A Frenchman, 77-year-old former Christian Democratic Prime Minister Pierre Pflimlin, has just been elected the president of the new European Parliament, and at German request, outgoing French Finance Minister Jacques Delors is being transferred to Brussels to head the European Commission.

Mitterrand's new government is better designed than previous ones to continue France's role as the leading force in building a European nuclear superpower. ■

New Prime Minister Laurent Fabius will promote European military development to gain independence.

them to office when "national interest dictated a change in tune." And both turned to the referendum as a means of giving their personal power a broad popular legitimacy free of the political forces that originally backed them.

Mitterrand has pulled the rug out from under the right's massive campaign against the left's educational reform bill by withdrawing the bill and promising a constitutional reform to allow popular referendums on questions concerning "liberties." He thereby also pulled the rug out from his own education minister, Alain Savary, the author of the controversial bill, and Mauroy, who had helped amend it to meet opposition objections. This disavowal led to Savary's resignation and the cabinet reshuffle.

role in stimulating economic growth, is only superficially a concession to the left. Chevenement is above all a French patriot who, in his year out of office, has been stressing the need for "modernization." Modernization—and no longer "change," much less "socialism"—is the official goal of the new government.

In posts concerned with ideology more than with the economy, Chevenement and other members of his CERES faction may contribute, thanks to their criticism of American imperialism, to the current buildup of a French-led European military power, supposedly to assure independence from the "superpowers." While the left in other European countries is suspicious of patriotism and military power, Chevenement personifies a

In appointing Fabius, Mitterrand is trying to create a center-left for the 1986 election.



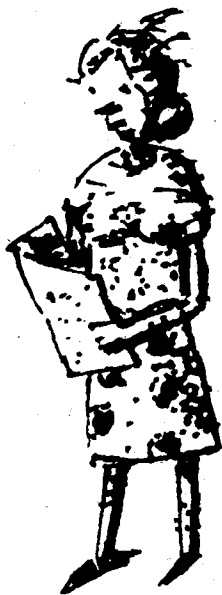
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NICARAGUA

By Chris Norton

MANAGUA

NICARAGUA CELEBRATED the fifth anniversary of its revolution July 19 amidst a draining war by U.S.-directed contras and political maneuvering by pro-U.S. political parties.

In the space of a week, these parties named candidates for the upcoming November 4 election, welcomed home their presidential candidate, former ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Cruz, issued an ultimatum that they wouldn't run unless all their demands were met, and then, as the deadline for parties to register came, announced they wouldn't participate. At press time it is unclear whether the parties will eventually run candidates.

Many observers believe the whole charade was designed to embarrass the Sandinistas at the beginning of the electoral campaign and to give the Reagan administration ammunition to discredit the election, which it has already claimed will be a "Soviet-style farce."

Meanwhile, the Sandinistas declared that the elections would go ahead and large numbers of Nicaraguans registered to vote. The Sandinistas are expected to win the elections easily, especially in the absence of strong candidates from the pro-U.S. business sector parties. Of the small left and centrist parties participating in the election, only the Independent Liberal Party (PLI), headed by Virgilio Godoy, the former minister of labor in the Sandinista government, could make a strong showing. The PLI was part of the pro-Sandinista Patriotic Front until February, when they withdrew to prepare their campaign. Still, Godoy's base is limited mainly to Nicaragua's relatively small middle class.

The Sandinistas, on the other hand,

Arturo Cruz, the U.S.-backed presidential candidate, got a hero's welcome by the upper class—a display many believe was calculated to embarrass the Sandinistas.

have broad popular support, especially in the poor working-class barrios and among campesinos, who make up almost half the population and who have received land under the agrarian reform. Interior Minister Tomas Borge has told reporters he would cry if the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) didn't get 70 percent of the vote, perhaps an optimistic figure but a measure of their confidence.

In another sign of confidence, the head of the directorate and FSLN candidate for president, Daniel Ortega, announced a loosening of the state of emergency restrictions July 19. Ortega pointed to the Reagan administration's hypocrisy, calling for greater democracy in Nicaragua and at the same time launching a covert war that Ortega said had necessitated the emergency restrictions.

Press censorship was lifted, except regarding military affairs, and political parties that registered will have complete freedom to hold public meetings, previously restricted under the emergency law.

Is Cruz' return merely for show?

But the self-defined democratic parties immediately rejected the concession as "insufficient," and reiterated a nine-point list of demands, pledging not to run unless all of them were met. Most of them were merely technical and many had already been addressed.

But their candidate Arturo Cruz announced that their non-negotiable demand was that the government start a "national dialog" with the contras, a demand unacceptable to the Sandinistas. This move may backfire on the conservatives, since it identifies them with the U.S.-backed contras, despised by most Nicaraguans, even those opposed to the Sandinistas.

This position further pegs the opposition as a front for the Reagan administration, which asserts that the U.S.-directed contra attacks are actually a civil war fought by former revolutionaries betrayed by the Sandinista directorate. The other major U.S. identified opposition group, the Catholic hierarchy led by Archbishop Miguel Obando y Bravo, also called for "national reconciliation" with the contras in Obando's Easter pastoral letter.

Whatever domestic repercussions, the drama of the "honest Democrat" Arturo Cruz returning to Nicaragua to battle the "totalitarian Sandinistas" will probably sell well in the U.S. Cruz is an ideal candidate by U.S. standards—a career banker with the Interamerican Development Bank, he served as head of Nicaragua's central bank as well as ambassador to the U.S. under the Sandinistas that allows him to be portrayed as a disenchanted former Sandinista.

Cruz got a hero's welcome by Nicaragua's upper class. Met at the airport by representatives of bourgeois parties, COSEP (a right-wing private sector group), leaders of pro-U.S. labor groups, and most of the employees of the conservative *La Prensa*, a crowd of supporters shouted, "With Arturo Cruz, we'll have toothpaste" (a commodity in short supply in Nicaragua), and "comunismo, no, democracia, si."

The next day he laid a wreath for the martyred *La Prensa* editor, Somoza foe Pedro Joaquin Chamorro, and described himself as a true follower of the ideals of Sandino, but a "centrist" between the extreme left and right.

While attacked by the pro-government papers, Cruz was lionized by *La Prensa*, which published an eight-part series he wrote detailing Nicaragua's descent under the Sandinistas.

Despite Cruz' performance, which the Sandinistas charged was directed by the CIA, the U.S. is reportedly unhappy with the Nicaraguan opposition, considering them incompetent and more interested in debating fine ideological points than negotiating with the FSLN. The Sandinistas have shown themselves to be far better organizers and politicians.

War toll grows.

The FSLN still has major problems—the war, shortages of basic goods and tensions with the Catholic Church hierarchy. The war is much more serious than generally reported in the U.S. press. Some 7,400 Nicaraguans have been killed by the contras in the last three years, a yearly average proportionally 10 times higher than the number of American lives lost annually in Vietnam.

In the past four months Democratic National Front (FDN) counterrevolutionaries have increased their attacks in northern Nicaragua. They appear to be better trained and equipped, especially with sophisticated communications gear. Their biggest boost has been regular aerial resupply flights by planes and helicopters

based in Honduras. These flights allow the contras, who formerly attacked, then immediately retreated to Honduras, to remain in the thinly populated mountains in Nicaragua.

The contras have started major battalion-sized attacks. The last was against Ocotol, a regional center near the Honduran border. More than 1,000 troops attacked the town June 1, and a special commando unit penetrated the center of town, destroying the radio station, a sawmill, a government food distribution warehouse and other civilian targets.

Just before the July 19 celebration, another contra force estimated at 1,500 attacked government-sponsored agricultural projects just 15 kilometers north of Esteli, the deepest penetration into this part of the country. The attackers com-

In addition to drafting young men for six months of Patriotic Military Service and the large-scale mobilization, the government has made special efforts to ensure these areas adequate supplies. Throughout northern Nicaragua, campesinos till their land with rifles slung over their shoulders. Julio Arce, an agricultural worker on a collective dairy and cattle farm in Esteli, says he sometimes worries about contra attacks. But he's willing to defend the revolution's gains. "Before, we worked for the bosses," Arce said. "We made 10 cordovas a day. Now we make 44, and the profits are shared equally among us [the 43 partners in the collective]." The collective has existed for five years, and the government has built many houses on the outskirts of Esteli, which it sells cheaply to workers on long-term loans.

Esteli, along the northern Pan American highway, is undoubtedly one of the strongest bastions of Sandinista support. The Sandinistas organized some of their first underground cells there, which served as transit stops for guerrillas

In northern Nicaragua, campesinos still till their land with rifles slung over their shoulders.



pletely destroyed a \$1 million seed potato project sponsored by the Dutch government.

Contra casualties.

The government has responded by saturating these areas with troops and militia units, and the contras have taken heavy casualties—almost 500 in the last two weeks in June according to official sources. Despite the losses, the contra groups have been ordered to remain inside Nicaragua, indicating an apparent willingness on the part of the leadership to sacrifice these fighters.

Despite their offensive, the contras haven't been able to take control of any towns or territories. They have terrorized large portions of northern and central Nicaragua, striking at anyone and anything identified with the revolution. Government-sponsored agricultural co-ops and health centers have been particular targets, as well as campesinos and government workers. In contrast to Salvadoran guerrillas, contra forces use terror

heading north to fronts in the mountain ranges. These cells, in addition to a militant student and worker movement, attracted repression by Somoza. By the time of the September 1978 insurrection, the whole city was opposed to his rule, and when 25 guerrillas entered the town, the people rose up and held the city for 10 days until the National Guard, preceded by a savage aerial bombardment, reconquered the city block by block. Esteli, after two more insurrections was called "three times heroic." But it paid a heavy price—8,000 dead out of 40,000 residents and 60 percent of the housing destroyed.

Now, after starting to rebuild the city, residents are facing the prospects of new attacks. Many of the young men have already volunteered for military service, and many campesinos on the cooperatives are also mobilized. Seven of the 43 men on the La Porra collective where Arce works are serving on the front. So far none of them has been killed, but many other men from Esteli, both young and old, have come back in caskets. ■

Unions

Continued from page 3

raises of 10 percent in the first year and 4 percent in the following two years in part to compensate for losses caused by Reagan administration policies.

When the talks broke off as the contract expired, the Postal Service announced that it would unilaterally impose its last offer—a 23 percent cut for newly hired workers. But Rep. William Ford (D-MI), head of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee, argued that the Postal Reorganization Act of 1970 that set up the Postal Service as an independent federal agency prohibited such action. Just as postal workers are not allowed to strike but must submit to fact-finding and arbitration, Postal Service management cannot, as private employers can, unilaterally set terms once an impasse is reached, Ford said.

If the Postal Service action is not challenged and reversed in court, there will be increased clamor for a strike—or at least contingency plans for a strike—at the two big unions' conventions in late August. Union leaders had seemed confident that they could defend before arbitrators postal worker wages as in line with private sector pay. But the tie-breaking arbitrator on the panel could be named by the Reagan-appointed director of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, a man described by one union that knows him well as unabashedly pro-company.

A study for the Postal Service showed postal workers receiving 23 percent more than the average private sector wage, and a higher premium in comparison with all retail trade or service work. But postal worker wages are less than those of competitors at UPS or Federal Express. In any case, it would be more appropriate to compare with union contracts, not average pay, and the average postal pay of \$11.80 an hour is not out of line. Besides, the average private sector pay reflects lower rates due to racial and sex discrimination in jobs and pay, and the Postal Service's apparent high pay in part reflects its less discriminatory employment policies.

"Of course, it's terribly politically motivated," APWU spokesman Alan Madison said of the Postal Service demands. "You'd have to have lived in a cave in Krivitz, Wisc., for years not to believe so." Oakland APWU branch president Paul Roose sees the Postal Service trying to establish the two-tier system as a precedent for both the federal government and the private sector.

AFL-CIO contract analyst John Zalusky believes that employers pushing two-tier pay systems, which cropped up back in the '50s in an effort to restrain skilled worker wages, "are looking at the long-term advantage, not the short-term. It's more symbolic of trying to break the union." Union leaders fear such discriminatory systems will divide workers, turn new workers against unions and restrain wage improvements, first hurting black and women workers more but eventually affecting everyone.

That is particularly bad in light of the

2.8 percent annual wage increase in contracts this year (compared with 6.6 percent the last time those contracts were negotiated but about the same as 1983 contracts), a figure depressed by the wage cuts in many construction union contracts. Another sign of continued labor weakness in the face of such difficulties: strike activity so far this year has been even lower than in the past two years, which were record lows.

Auto and coal.

Auto and coal union leaders think that they can hold—or gain—ground without pushing up those strike statistics. It is still early in the talks, and full proposals have not been offered—or made public. (The UMW is being especially closed-mouthed.) But both the UAW and the UMW want to restrict subcontracting of work, and that would not only raise employer costs but also involve more union control over management—a guaranteed point of bitter conflict.

The UMW also faces further unraveling of the united employer front, the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA). Only 30 operators remain, compared to 130 last time, although they control two-thirds of the tonnage. Smaller mine owners may hope for better terms or at least to avoid a strike, but the UMW has sent letters to all asking for pledges to abide by the BCOA agreement. As part of its extensive education program to prepare miners for the possibility of selective strikes, as opposed to the usual industry-wide walkout, the union is also trying to prevent inexperienced local negotiators from making agreements without the international's supervision.

Besides protection against subcontracting, the UMW is likely to strengthen transfer rights for laidoff miners and make it easier to organize non-union operations. And the companies will probably want to cut medical costs and holidays. Although parts of the coal industry are hurting and nearly one-third of the 160,000 active UMW members are out of work, the union is likely to want wage and benefit gains as well, especially since productivity has increased so rapidly—57 percent in underground mines since 1978.

Autoworkers can point not only to record corporate profits but also to big productivity gains—15 percent over 1982-83—as justification for "restore and more," the slogan of the movement to recoup concession losses and make new gains. So far leaders in that campaign are happy with the UAW bargaining positions. Those include reduced work time (possibly restoration of the paid personal holidays that were surrendered), controls on "outsourcing" (shifting work to non-UAW factories domestically or overseas), double pay for overtime (as a way of discouraging the massive overtime that blocked rehiring of an estimated 55,000 workers last year), better pensions (also a way of opening jobs to the unemployed), a return to the annual productivity-linked pay increases in addition to improved profit-sharing and greater controls over investment and new technology.

"We're going directly for a say in the investment function of the corporation," UAW spokesman Peter Laarman says. "We want all sourcing decisions to be negotiated with us. We want veto power. We want joint determination across the board. 'You wanted us to be partners in adversity and we were, [the union is saying to the companies]. Now we want to be partners in success and job security.'"

The figures clearly illustrate the UAW's concern. This year with 565,000 hourly

workers—170,000 fewer than in 1978, the auto companies will produce nearly as many cars and trucks. Worse, small car production in the U.S. is threatened. GM still may pull the plug on its Saturn project to develop a new small car, and that is one of the clubs it will use this fall against the UAW. Already it is planning to import 290,000 small cars from Japan, 60,000 from Korea and 60,000 from Mexico as well as assemble 200,000 cars in the U.S. jointly with Toyota that will have half imported parts.

Ford is also planning imports of 160,000 cars from Mexico and Europe. The union, consequently, is considering negotiating some form of "domestic content" requirement in its contract, modeled on its controversial legislation. This would require a set percentage of the value of GM and Ford cars to be produced domestically.

So far the contractual requirements for consultation have been hard to enforce. As negotiations started, the UAW angrily protested a sudden shift of 250 jobs out of a Flint plant—part of the new "Buick City"—to a nearby non-UAW parts plant. Another 1,200 jobs in Flint were



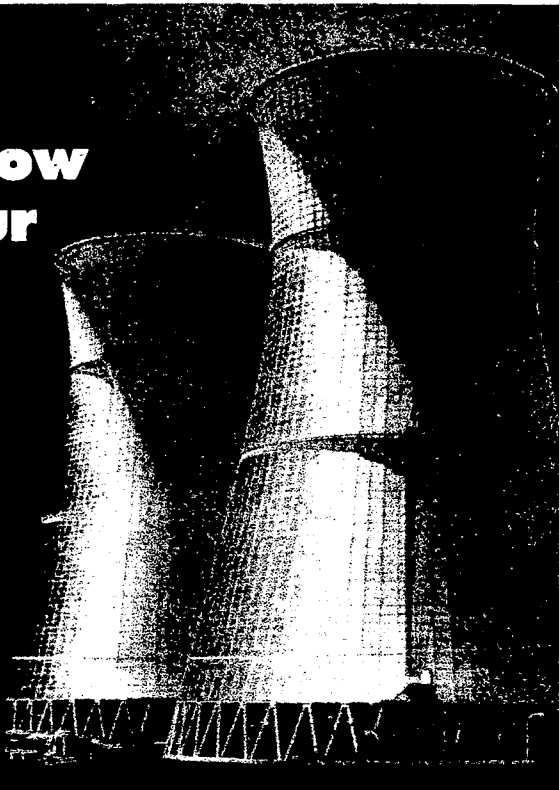
Labor security is threatened by low pay for new hires as well as 'outsourcing.' Greater union control, shorter work weeks, less overtime and old-fashioned solidarity are some responses.

also shifted when GM sold stamping plant equipment to another, reportedly non-union firm building a new plant.

Union bargainers expect the companies to offer money as a way of distracting workers from demands on outsourcing. But the union is not interested in a buy-out, as the typographers' union negotiated years ago. It wants jobs—in the UAW—including transfer into new sectors, such as the computer service firm—Electronic Data Systems—that GM recently purchased for \$2.5 billion. Pete Kelly, a GM bargaining committee member who is president of the Tech Center local, said, "We have to take care of the anger in the plants from concessions, the [executive] bonuses, but also to look to the long term and look for union controls over outsourcing and new technology."

If the shock of recent concessions gives way to new union demands for control over corporate investment decisions and expanded employment, as the mineworkers and, to a greater extent, the autoworkers are making, then a new era of labor relations may yet emerge but with labor, not management, setting the framework for dispute.

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By David Mandel

JERUSALEM

THE WEEK AFTER THE MOST IN-
decisive election in Israel's
history, the country's par-
liamentary system is being
pulled by strong forces to-
ward a probable major realignment.

Most of the electorate was polarized
around the two major blocs. But gains
were registered by parties on their fringes,
to Labor's left and the Likud's right,
while the center parties, which thrive on
bargaining with both sides, all did worse
than they had hoped. Yet because of the
stalemate, these parties have more lever-
age than ever before. This seems likely to
force, a little later if not immediately, a
government involving at least part of
both large rival groups.

The opposition Labor-led alignment
emerged with the largest number of seats.
But the initial celebrating took place
among the ruling Likud bloc, which fin-
ished only three seats behind, 44 to 41.
Pre-vote polls had predicted a gap be-
tween 10 and 20 seats (they are allocated
proportionately).

Likud morale was further bolstered by
the fact that five of the seven seats it lost
compared to its 1971 total were gained by
parties even further to the right, includ-
ing the racist Meir Kahane, whose appeal
to the lumpen element in depressed neigh-
borhoods and towns attracted an embar-
rassing 26,000 votes, 1.3 percent of the
total. Together the Likud and other solid-
ly anti-Labor parties control 49 out of
120 seats, and at least seven more mem-
bers of parliament (MPs) would clearly
prefer to go with the right. While the
total represents a slight drop from three
years ago, there was clearly no significant
erosion in the right's majority among Is-
rael's Jewish population, despite wide-
spread dissatisfaction with the conduct of
its economic and foreign policies.

The three seats lost by Labor to closely
allied parties on its dovish flank, which
doubled their representation to six, and a
new, more radical party—Progressive
List for Peace—won enough Arab votes
for two additional places in Parliament.
Together with the Communist-led Demo-
cratic Front for Peace and Equality
(DFPE), which held on to its forum, this
grants Labor a "cushion" of six more
solid anti-Likud votes, though the two
left parties are considered too outside the
pale to actually join the government. The
anti-Likud total is thus 56, exactly the
same as the pro-Likud total.

That leaves eight newly elected MPs in
the center who could go either way. Of-
fers of policy concessions and high cab-
inet seats real and rumored were thus the
subject of bids by both major blocs to
maneuver majorities for themselves dur-
ing the post-election week.

Contradictory rumors were flying as
the negotiations picked up steam once the
final results were announced, and five of

Likud and Labor may both split to yield a more secular center.

the eight pivotal politicians seemed to be
leaning slightly toward Labor, which
might bring in a few more. Shimon Peres,
therefore, might soon be able to form a
weak coalition that would have to avoid
offending a host of contradictory inter-
ests: religious nationalists only slightly
less committed than the Likud to massive
settlements in the occupied territories;
anti-clerical doves who hoped before the
election to be Labor's sole coalition part-
ner; the Likud's former finance minister,
who campaigned on a platform of severe
austerity and who has now reportedly
been offered his old job by Labor; the
DFPE and progressives on the left, who
would not blindly support a government
that differed little from the Likud; and in
a crucial position, with three seats, for-
mer Likud Defense Minister Ezer Weiz-
man and company, seeking a route back
to the corridors of power.



Der Spiegel

such "national unity" did poorly; Weiz-
man entered the race with hopes of a
much better showing: the National Reli-
gious Party came out with only four seats
as opposed to six in 1981 and 12 in 1977:
and Tami, which precipitated the election
and hoped to enlarge its three-member
faction by winning the ethnic, North Af-
rican Jewish vote, ended up with only one
MP.

But during the campaign's final week,
Yitzhak Shamir and the Likud skillfully
raised the slogan of national unity as part
of their last-ditch effort to put Labor on
the defensive. And the strategy worked.
Peres, confident of a large victory, dis-
missed the possibility as not serious, which
it wasn't. But about 80,000 disenchanted
former Likud voters who had told the poll-
sters that they would probably vote for
Labor this time, changed their minds at
the last minute, afraid of a one-sided re-
sult and enticed by "unity." These voters'

ISRAEL

Voters' stalemate sets stage for major bloc shifts



Der Spiegel

But Likud prospects look at least as
dismal. The right end of the spectrum is
deeply estranged from Weizman because
of his relatively dovish turn over the last
several years. And a Likud-based coal-
ition would have to include as well four
different religious parties, all of which
are after similar spoils.

National unity?

A likely outcome appears to be that each
large party will be able to keep the other
from building a majority. This is espe-
cially true because all eight men in the
middle insist that their first choice would
be "national unity" government involv-
ing both Labor and Likud.

The idea is not new: Likud ministers
sat in a Labor-led government from 1967
to 1970, but as distinctly junior partners,
and during a period of euphoria and eco-
nomic boom following the Six-day War.
In the recent election the proposal played
a crucial role that has been overlooked by
most analysts.

The small parties that promise to seek

five seats made a world of difference.

Thus, while a government involving at
least parts of both Labor and Likud may
well emerge, the idea has serious prob-
lems. For one thing both parties insist on
heading it. While Labor points to its larg-
er vote total as a mandate for the task,
the Likud claims that more of the small
parties prefer it.

On the other hand, if the small center
parties hold out too long, the two major
parties could conceivably agree to rotate
the premiership and leave them out in the
cold. This would horrify the religious
parties most of all, because one thing that
most of the Labor Party and Likud MPs
could easily agree on would be a drastic
reduction on theocratic restrictions on
recreation and personal life.

Despite their look-alike gains during
the campaign, there are real issues that
separate Labor and the Likud. Most of
Labor's leaders and constituents are gen-
uinely alarmed at the prospect of long-
term rule over a hostile population of 1.5
million in the West Bank and Gaza strip,

IN THESE TIMES AUGUST 8-21, 1984 11
while the Likud is committed to holding
the territories and eventually incorporat-
ing them into Israel.

Yet the Likud does not really have an
answer on how this could be accomplish-
ed without either sacrificing the state's
Jewish character or creating a South Af-
rica. The dilemma partly explains the rise
of the ultra-right Kahane—who is only
slightly less fanatic than Tehiya (five
seats) and Morasha, one of the religious
parties (two seats)—as well as the popu-
larity of Likud figures like Ariel Sharon.
Kahane explicitly, and the others impli-
citly, point to a solution of "emigration"
—unlikely ever to be voluntary. Kahane
explains the apartheid options: "Dem-
ocracy and Judaism are not compatible."

While such ideas did attract an alarm-
ing number of votes, they are by no means
shared by all Likud supporters. Most of
the bloc's Liberal Party component could
swallow Labor's outlook on the territor-
ies, if offered the right cabinet seats. Even
in post-Menachem Begin's Herut (the
Likud's major faction), some leaders and
many young followers are far less com-
mitted to the traditional greater-Israel
view than the old guard. A Likud now
unable to rule as it has for the past seven
years and without its former patriarch
could easily break up under the strain of
parliamentary deadlocks. Part of it might
then join a Labor-led government while
trying to regroup with Weizman and oth-
er forces of the moderate right.

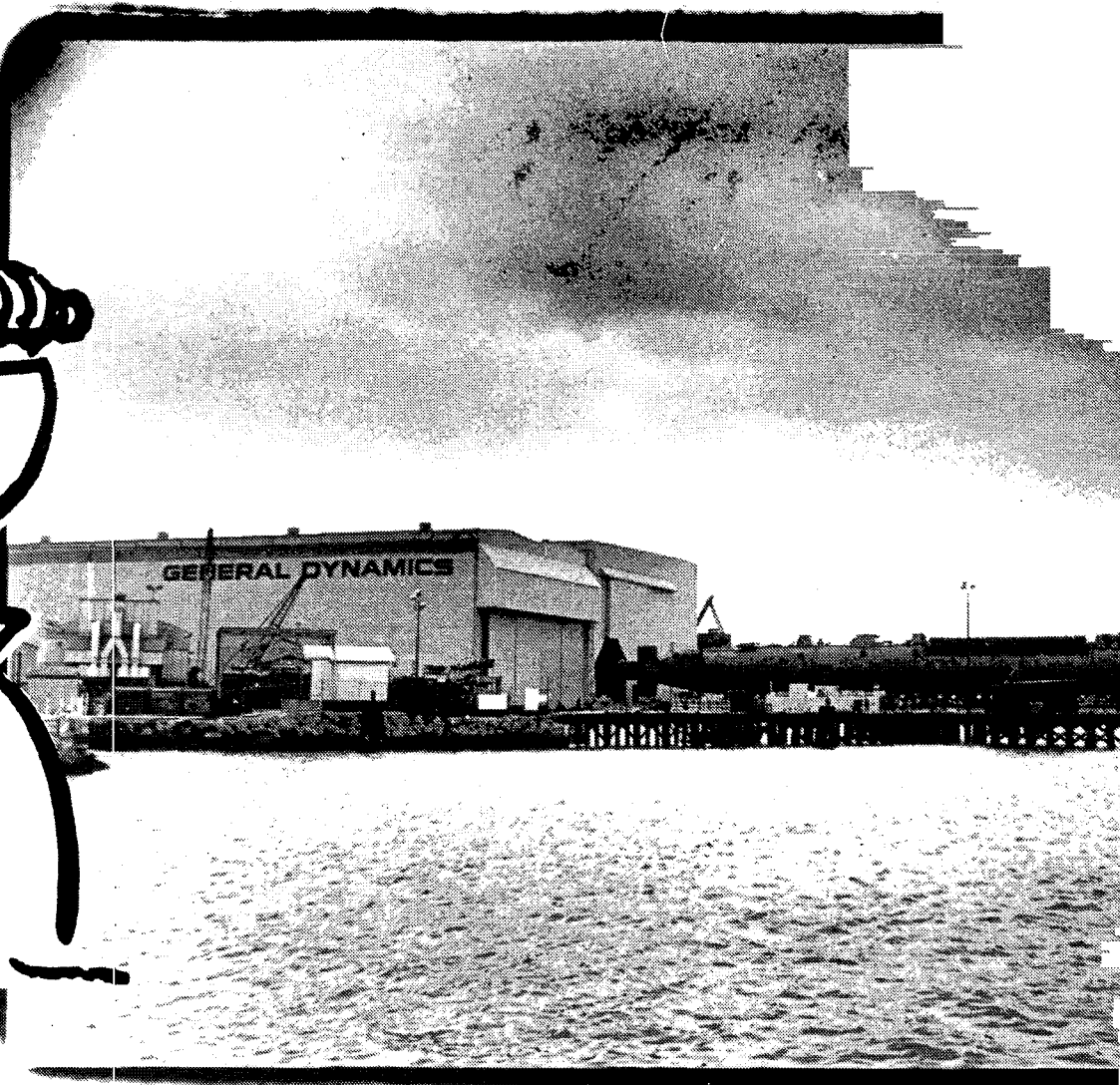
If this happens, several of the most
dovish Labor MPs together with its old
*Yitzhak Shamir's (above) call for national
unity pulled his trailing Likud coalition
to within three seats of Labor, led by
Shimon Peres (below).*

left Zionist partner Mapam (six seats on
the joint slate) might feel less constrained
from splitting the other large bloc as
well. Peres could still remain premier be-
cause the Likud would have split first,
and a new sizable bloc of the moderate
left could be formed together with the
three MP citizen rights movement. A
Labor fissure could even be a relatively
friendly one: for years many party activ-
ists, both hawks and doves, have suggest-
ed that their total electoral appeal might
be greater if they ran separately and then
cooperated in coalition building. This
never happened for fear that the Likud
might then become even larger and con-
solidate its rule.

In any case, a more rational realign-
ment of the secular center that might be
able to stand up to the religious bloc
might result. And if prodded enough
domestically and by the outside world,
such a center government could reject
once and for all the ultra-right's delu-
sions of empire and halt the danger of
fascism.

GO DIRECTLY TO JAIL

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By Don Michak

GEORGE C. DAVIS WAS A GUY who made things happen for a tiny marine construction company, the Frigitemp Corporation. In a few quick years, Davis and his friends turned Frigitemp from a small-time refrigeration plant in the Bronx into a major defense subcontractor with operations in several states and millions of dollars in billings. Davis and his buddies got rich producing liquified natural gas tankers, nuclear attack submarines and destroyer/escort ships. But Frigitemp was forced into bankruptcy in late 1978.

Two weeks ago a federal jury convicted Davis and three others of conspiracy, racketeering and fraud. They had gotten Frigitemp contracts by bribing senior executives at one of the nation's largest defense companies. A federal prosecutor called the boys from Frigitemp "a gang of crooks and thieves." Independent investigators have linked the firm's questionable financial practices with at least one other major military contractor.

Two other men supposed to be tried with Davis were top officials at the General Dynamics Corporation shipyards in Massachusetts and Connecticut. Neither appeared in court. James H. Gilliland, a former chief engineer and assistant to the general manager at the corporation's Electric Boat Division, skipped the country sometime after being indicted in September 1983. He was later arrested in Britain and jailed for failure to list certain assets for the tax authorities, but early this year an English magistrate reportedly refused to extradite him. Federal officials now say they have no idea where Gilliland is. He was last seen in London.

The biggest fish caught in the Frigitemp net appears to be Gilliland's boss at Electric Boat, P. Takis Veliotis. Veliotis was a director of General Dynamics and executive vice-president of the shipbuilding division. Like Gilliland, he fled about the time a grand jury handed down the indictment naming him as a bribe taker. While Davis sweated in a lower Manhattan courtroom, Veliotis was reported to be cruising the Mediterranean in his air-conditioned 87-foot yacht.

Reporters flocked to the Davis trial, but the real story rests with Veliotis somewhere off the Greek coast. The indomitable Greek has been at the center of the government's kickback case from the beginning and has steadfastly maintained his innocence. His attorney in Athens says Veliotis believes that General Dynamics executives at headquarters in St.

Louis have fabricated the case against him to prevent him from testifying in a federal investigation of massive fraud and cost overruns on the Navy's Trident and Los Angeles class nuclear submarines.

"If I tell everything I know," Veliotis told a Greek journalist in January, "They will all go to jail. Now they throw mud at me because I am their target. However, beware of my attack."

In March the former General Dynamics executive met secretly with congressional investigators dispatched to Greece by Sen. William Proxmire (D-WI). As chairman of the Joint Economics Committee, Proxmire had conducted hearings on the corporation's cost overruns several times in the past. (The senator convened another hearing July 23 on Veliotis' charges.)

Proxmire says Veliotis has offered to tell exactly how General Dynamics defrauded the Navy of more than \$800 million, and that he appears to have documents to prove his charges. In a recent speech to the Senate, Proxmire said that Veliotis believes General Dynamics deliberately underbid on its nuclear submarine contracts, only to file excessive and phony claims later to recover its losses. Veliotis implicated high officials at the corporation and is prepared to "name names as well as places and times of meetings, the substance of conversations and actions that were taken," Proxmire said.

Reagan vulnerable.

Veliotis is a prosecutor's dream: an insider angry enough to tell all. He is also capable of doing severe damage to the Rea-



gan administration—which closed the case against the shipbuilder under questionable circumstances—and to the Pentagon's way of doing business. An examination of the case against General Dynamics reveals not only that the Justice Department botched its original investigation, but also that the Pentagon's weapons procurement system gave the corporation every opportunity to take advantage of American taxpayers. The record shows the government placed General Dynamics on the dole without so much as a onceover. Poor people have had more trouble getting a month's food stamp allotment than General Dynamics had milking millions from the Navy.

The story of how the nation's number-one defense contractor reaped more than \$600 million in cash from the Navy is one of converting a fixed-price contract into a cost-plus contract. The firm's Electric Boat Division was the only builder of nuclear attack submarines for the Navy in the early '70s. It had agreed to build 18 SSN-688s. As production began it was soon apparent that costs would be much higher than the company's bid. Although its contracts with the Navy stated the corporation would have to absorb cost overruns, a cost escalation clause allowed the company to recover certain costs related to inflation and other unforeseen causes. Caught between the end of the Vietnam war weapons-system buildup and the Nixon recession, General Dynamics was soon counting up overruns and charging the Navy with delays and expensive design changes. The Navy countered with charges of poor management, an undisciplined workforce and general contractor inefficiencies.

In February 1975, General Dynamics made \$231.5 million in claims on its first contract for seven submarines. The Navy's claims review board—composed mostly of military officers because the Nixon administration abolished a tough civilian review unit in 1972—agreed to pay the company \$97 million, or less than half the amount demanded. But the board said it fully expected General Dynamics to return with a claim on its second contract for the remaining 11 submarines.

Soon afterward, Electric Boat officials offered to settle claims for both contracts for another \$53 million, according to retired Admiral Hyman Rickover, often called "the father of the nuclear Navy." General Dynamics wanted the cash quickly to escape bank pressure. But Rickover says the Navy turned down the company because it had not officially submitted a second claim.

By now the claims issue was a political

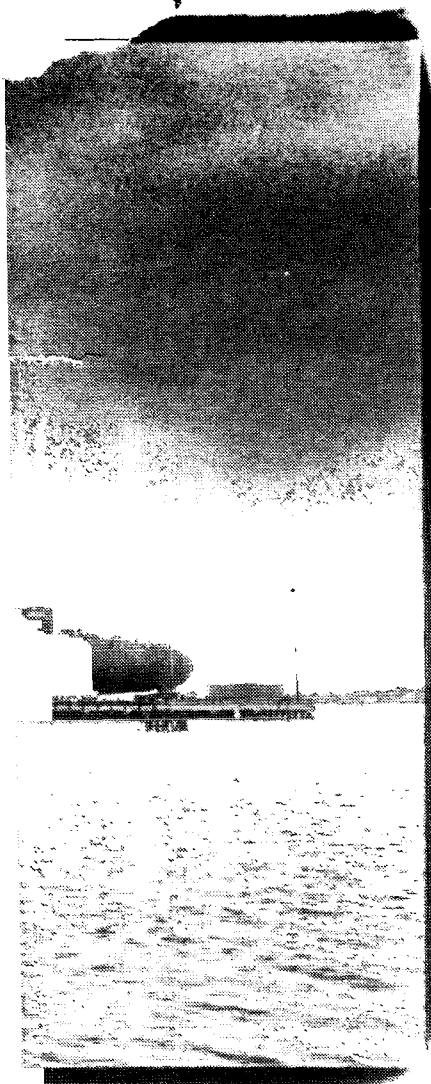
hot potato in Washington, where three other shipbuilders were pressing the Navy for more than \$1.5 billion. The warlike atmosphere surrounding the General Dynamics negotiations led Deputy Defense Secretary William F. Clements to offer an extraordinary compromise. Citing a controversial law that permits the Navy Secretary to modify existing defense contracts, he offered \$178 million to General Dynamics under Public Law 85-804. The statute is essentially a welfare program for defense contractors. It allows special payments to companies in so much financial trouble that they may not be able to meet military contract obligations.

Clements said that Electric Boat stood to lose about \$135 million in the submarine contracts, and that his proposal would give the company a profit of about \$20 million. Clements' suggestion was greeted with hoots and hollers. Adm. Rickover publicly questioned why a political appointee in the Ford administration wanted to pay General Dynamics \$120 million more than the last offer its lawyers had made the government. A senior member of the House Armed Services Committee called the proposal "a sweet-

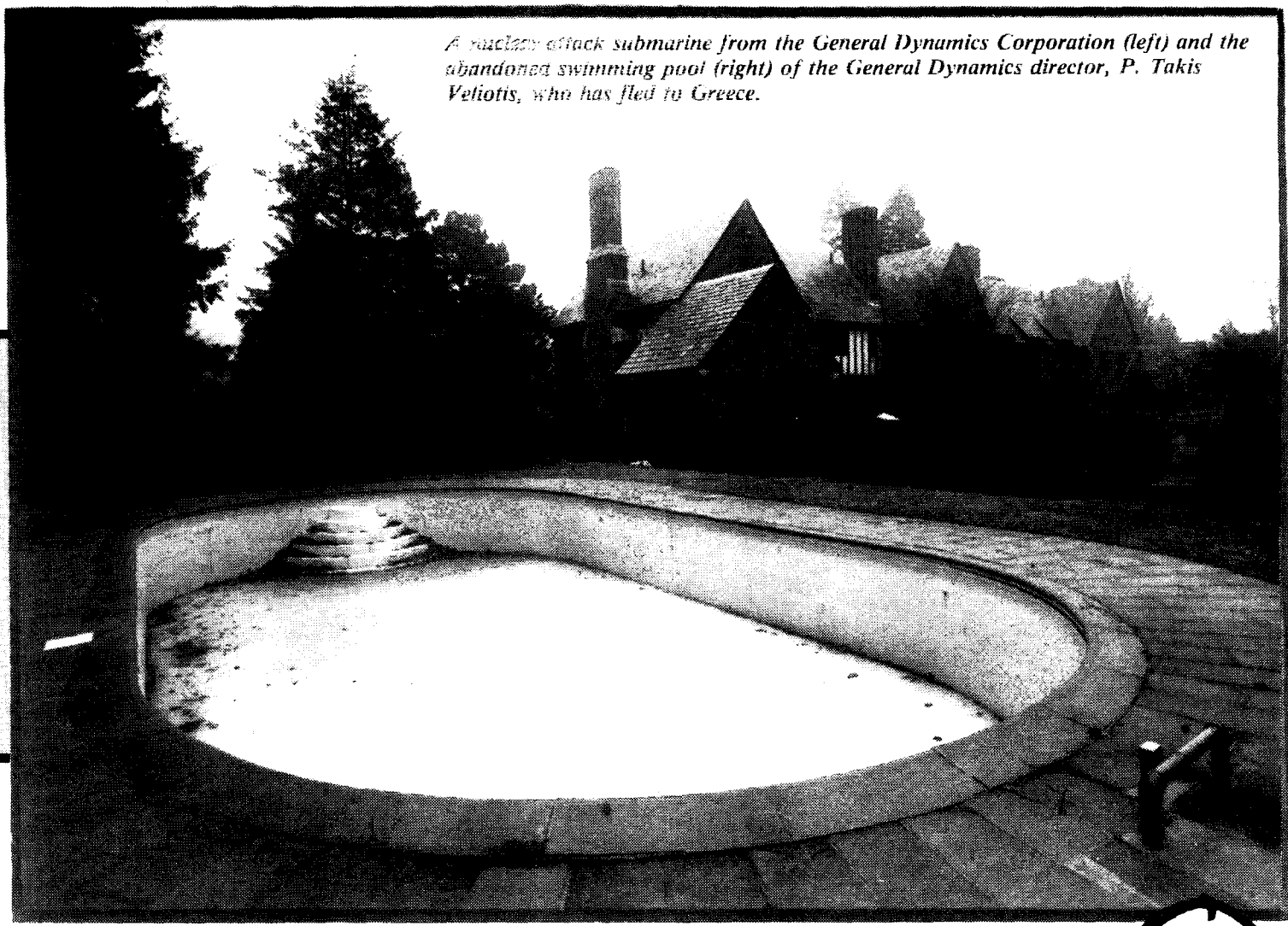


heart arrangement with the contractors."

By December 1976 General Dynamics had revised its total claims upward to \$544 million on both contracts. Even the Navy's review board had a hard time swallowing the new figures—about half the original construction price of the subs. But the corporation mounted a massive lobbying campaign, pressing its case before congressional panels, court-



Liane Delevigne



Paul Born

A nuclear attack submarine from the General Dynamics Corporation (left) and the abandoned swimming pool (right) of the General Dynamics director, P. Takis Veliotis, who has fled to Greece.

Pentagon and urging Adm. Rickover's mandatory retirement.

In March 1977, former Electric Boat General Manager Gordon MacDonald told Congress that General Dynamics "has struggled against overwhelming odds to build the SSN-688 class submarines. Thousands of engineering changes and design modifications, delays and inflation have caused monumental difficulties for the company. ...If Electric Boat had been an independent company operating on its own, it would have been bankrupted by the Navy. As we see it," MacDonald had the gall to add, "the Navy has in effect been taking unfair advantage of General Dynamics' shareholders."

The Carter administration.

General Dynamics also found a friend in Edward Hidalgo, an assistant secretary of the Navy and self-described "point man" on the claims negotiations for the Carter administration. Two weeks before the Navy claims review board was to complete a year-long review of General Dynamics' \$544 million claim, Hidalgo withdrew the claim from the board's consideration. That led to another heated congressional hearing in which he explained that the corporation would simply ignore the review board's finding if not to its satisfaction and press its threat to stop construction on the subs unless the Navy settled soon.

Political pressure forced Hidalgo to return the claim to the review board, which promptly valued the company's losses at \$125 million instead of \$544 million. The board's number was a far cry from the 70 percent of its claims the corporation had expected. So the company decided to tough it out. It would stop all work on the contracts unless the Navy came across by April 1978, it said.

Hidalgo resumed his high-level contacts with General Dynamics, and soon the Navy awarded the company a provisional payment of \$66.5 million. General Dynamics agreed to extend its work stoppage deadline another two months, and a settlement was announced on June 9, 1978. The Navy would pay the company the \$125 million its review board had approved, and would split the remaining \$718 million in claims. The Navy would pay its \$359 million share immediately and the company would reduce its billings to the Navy over six years to absorb its share.

Perhaps most important, the settlement was proposed under Public Law 85-804, the defense contractor bailout law the company had wanted to use from the start. That meant Congress had to ap-

prove any settlement, and a gaggle of New England politicians subsequently urged immediate approval of the multi-million-dollar bailout. Only Sen. Proxmire made loud objections. "The message the Navy is sending out is this," he said. "If you are a large contractor and you dominate an important portion of the defense market, file an inflated claim and the Navy will pay you the true value plus as much as 50 percent of the remaining portion."

After the controversial settlement was approved, the price of General Dynamics' stock rose to its highest level in more than a decade.



in trouble with

stock rose to its highest level in more than a decade.

After the settlement, Hidalgo was asked if he expected General Dynamics to file more claims. "I have been in very close touch with Mr. Veliotis," he answered, "...and I have no foundation to say whatsoever that claims are being prepared today by Electric Boat against the Navy. ...There has been a most cordial relationship." But Hidalgo was wrong. The corporation subsequently submitted new claims totaling nearly \$100 million, most related to the cost of correcting mistakes the shipyard had made earlier. By the time General Dynamics agreed to set aside this claim in an apparent exchange for more submarine contracts in 1982, Veliotis had hired Hidalgo to help the corporation sell tanks in Europe.

Hidalgo denied any connection between fees received from General Dynamics for his new job and his former role as "point man" on the claims issue. "I will defend those settlements until my dying day," he recently told the *Washington Post*. "I have nothing to conceal or apologize for."

A torpedo launched a few months earlier by Adm. Rickover soon threatened to sink the agreement. At the same hearing where Hidalgo had tried to excuse his meddling with the Navy review board,

the gadfly admiral had declared that the General Dynamics claims were grossly exaggerated to the point of fraud. Rickover reported that he had forwarded specific examples of suspected fraud to the Navy's general counsel and ultimately to the Justice Department.

The federal government, however, moved very cautiously on the investigation from the beginning. Former Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti told *In These Times* he had a "dim recollection" that former U.S. Attorney in Connecticut Richard Blumenthal had pursued the matter before he left office, and didn't know "why there was later inaction."

Blumenthal won't talk about the shipyard investigation now, citing legal protection of grand jury secrets. But according to a former assistant U.S. attorney he assigned to the case in 1978, the probe went slowly, directed only on a part-time basis by a single attorney. "After a few months of working on it, it became clear a full-time attorney was required if it was going to go anywhere," said Thomas P. Smith, now a federal magistrate in Bridgeport.

Day-to-day responsibility for the fraud investigation at Electric Boat soon shifted to Donald McCaffrey, a Justice Department prosecutor who moved to Connecticut for the interim. Like the other officials, McCaffrey won't comment because he participated in the grand jury proceedings.

Sources close to the investigation, however, say that McCaffrey presided over two Hartford grand juries that called about 40 witnesses. In addition, the three-year probe was assisted by more than a dozen FBI and other federal agents, representing a major investigative commitment. These sources also say the grand juries were asked early on to consider whether the corporation deliberately underbid on its contracts.

That contention, of course, is the central point Takis Veliotis stressed to investigators, including McCaffrey and his superior at the Justice Department, who have since traveled to Greece. But Veliotis also claims that federal agents never interviewed him in the original probe, despite the fact that he headed Electric Boat during what he once described as a "work-disrupting witch hunt."

One former Electric Boat official called to testify before the grand jury was Joseph D. Pierce, a former general manager of the Groton shipyard who took early retirement in 1976. Pierce confirmed to *In These Times* that he is the individual Veliotis described to Proxmire as a General Dynamics official who resigned rather than go along with the corpora-



the government

tion's plans to make large claims against the Navy. Pierce, however, denied any knowledge of fraud by his former colleagues and would not say if federal investigators had asked him direct questions about the alleged fraud.

In any event, the government ended its investigation January 5, 1981, when Assistant Attorney General Lowell Jensen released a brief statement announcing its termination for lack of evidence. He also acknowledged he had given the news in advance to Albert Jenner, chief counsel and board member at General Dynamics and a former Republican counsel to the House Watergate Committee. Jensen, a longtime friend and colleague of presidential counselor Edwin Meese, was subsequently promoted by Attorney General William French Smith, who had final responsibility for closing the three-year probe without prosecution.

Adm. Rickover, who had earlier been forced to retire in part because of lobbying by General Dynamics, didn't buy Jensen's explanation and fired off memo after memo charging that the Justice Department had mishandled its investigation.

Donald McCaffrey and other Justice officials won't comment on Rickover's allegations. Even Jo Ann M. Harris, former chief of the criminal fraud section who reviewed McCaffrey's performance in the original probe, won't talk, though she is now in private practice in New York. "I don't speak about things that are not a matter of public record about my time at Justice," she says. "There's a lot that is not public record about that case."

Continued on page 22

EDITORIAL

New party stirs within the old

TELL ME SOMETHING — WOULD JESSE JACKSON EVEN BE A PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE...

IF IT WEREN'T FOR THE FACT THAT HE'S BLACK?

WELL... TELL ME SOMETHING—

WOULD RONALD REAGAN BE PRESIDENT IF HE WEREN'T WHITE?

WASSERMAN
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The Democratic convention is over, Walter Mondale is the party's presidential candidate and the platform adopted is, as Alexander Cockburn points out in *The Nation*, more reminiscent of Herbert Hoover than of the New Deal.

Does this mean, as Cockburn and Andrew Kopkind argued before the convention in *The Nation*, that the American left—by participating in the Democratic Party—has capitulated on an unprecedented scale?

Certainly, if one looks only at the political principles espoused by the Democratic standard bearers and those who control the party apparatus, both in and out of public office. From that view, left participation and support appears to be an act of self-denial. And yet, if one looks at the swelling ranks of active party members, especially among blacks, Hispanics and Asians, within the labor movement and, of course, among women, things look quite different.

Despite Mondale's centrist rhetoric and the regressive platform, the convention seemed a place where a new party might be taking shape, even as the old party was attempting to maintain its rule. It was a place where the elements for a new party were present, even if in different camps. And it was the presence of those elements that gave a sense of potential palpable in and around the convention that the party leaders and their platform could never inspire.

To criticize the left, as Kopkind and Cockburn do, one must first define it (which they don't). Many socialists, especially those in the traditional sectarian parties and their various permutations, and many '60s New Leftists, define the left exclusively. For them, being on the left is a badge of moral superiority, of special purity or honor. Participation in the mainstream of American politics, for them, is at best suspect and at worst betrayal. If it is done, it is done only reluctantly and temporarily, as a tactic to achieve an immediate end of overriding importance—right now, for example, the defeat of Ronald Reagan.

We have always defined the left inclusively and argued for the promotion of socialist principles and individuals within

the major party system. Our view of the left is that it comprises all those groups whose first principles, most generally stated, are commitment to both liberty and equality, rather than to corporate profitability. That includes all those whose commitment to democracy, social welfare and, in international affairs, self-determination is not subordinated to the drive for profitable investment or to the imperatives of the private investment system. In our view, that includes the great majority of blacks, Hispanics, Asian-Americans, women and labor, both organized and unorganized.

If brought together into a coherent and self-conscious force, this left would constitute a political majority in the United States. And the exciting thing about the Democratic convention was that it demonstrated a potential for bringing these forces together—not just under one roof, which was already happening, but in cooperation around a joint agenda.

The potential is real.

Of course, at best, only the potential now exists. Labor and the organized women's movement were in the Mondale camp. The more highly educated sectors of the work force tended to be in Hart's camp. And blacks made up almost all of Jackson's camp. But there was some indication, even at this convention, that the potential is real. Jackson had about 420 delegates, yet his platform planks on no first use of nuclear weapons, substantial reductions in military spending and on runoff primaries gathered from 1,200 to 1,400 votes, largely from organized women. And his plank on affirmative action was adopted in compromise form. Many labor Mondale delegates might also have voted for these planks had they not been under discipline.

As a black, Jackson was the natural left candidate, a position he consolidated as the campaign developed by speaking consistently against intervention in Central America and by adopting and then emphasizing George McGovern's early position on reductions in military spending. Labor's and the National Organization for Women's support of Mondale

was not so much a repudiation of Jackson as it was a desire to have some real influence with the nominee—which could never have been Jackson—and also to defeat John Glenn, who appeared in the early going to be Mondale's only real challenger.

But Jackson didn't need a handful of leftists, or a few left-led unions, or a liberal women's group to be taken seriously. He needed the overwhelming support of the black community, which, as the campaign wore on, he got. He, and they, are now a force in Democratic politics that will be difficult to ignore. They form a basis for future left coalitions, a basis that did not exist at the beginning of the campaign, and one that provides the other sectors of a potential left coalition unprecedented opportunities. The Mondale camp may understand that better than these sectors themselves. His staff aggressively courted the party's left-of-center constituencies—blacks, women, labor and freeze delegates—to gain their support for the platform as written. He seemed to perceive the power of these groups should they unite behind Jackson's demands, even if they did not.

The party of parties.

But what about our part of the left, the socialist and proto-socialist left? It was in and around the convention. Some 60 delegates attended the socialist caucus meeting, and some 2,000 people attended a public meeting the night before the convention started. But the impact of the socialists on the convention and on the party as a whole was even slighter than their numbers. A few individuals played some role, but as a coherent entity, the socialist left was all but non-existent.

Within the Jackson camp, Barry Commoner played a significant role, getting more consideration of his ideas than when he ran for president on a third party ticket in 1980. We had argued then that while his approach to the issues was exemplary, his forum doomed him to the role of a voice in the wilderness. This year, even as an advisor to another candidate, he had a greater impact than when he was himself a presidential nominee.

If this is so it is because—as we have frequently argued—the Democratic Party, like the Republican, is not a party but a party of parties, within which, under most circumstances, most politics of this nation takes place.

For their part, the Democratic Socialists of America (DSA) have long understood that the Democratic Party has been the place the left constituencies are found, that it has been the party of labor and in recent decades of blacks and increasingly of women. But DSA has demonstrated no awareness that the Democratic Party is many parties, and that to play a role in it requires having a constituency that can be mobilized and elect people to office. Jesse Jackson clearly understood this, and he created his party in a few short months. DSA, of course, does not have a natural constituency for socialism or for a socialist program and to build their own popular base of support must be a much longer and more painstaking effort.

But the leaders of DSA show no understanding that this is the stuff of politics. Quite the contrary. The perspective of DSA founders and leaders Irving Howe and Michael Harrington expressed in a recent *New York Times Magazine* article is closer to that of courtiers than of politicians. Not only did Harrington and Howe give no indication that they recognized what Jackson was doing—creating an electoral left constituency—but they suggested a role for themselves that consisted entirely of offering advice to the party's nominee, and that at some time in the future. If Mondale wins, Howe said, then DSA will have a role—because he lacks bold programs. That role goes like this: "He's going to need some substance and it's possible that he will have to turn toward the liberal-left thinkers." Like Irving and Michael, no doubt.

Of course, not all the members of DSA are sitting around waiting for Mondale to get elected so they can give him advice he neither wants nor needs. Many are active in other political organizations and campaigns—the Citizen Action network, NOW, labor unions and voter registration groups, to name a few. Its most prominent members are active in public life

The Democratic convention gave a glimpse of the potential for a major left party.

and in public office—people like William Winpisinger of the Machinists union, Rep. Ron Dellums, New York City Council Member Ruth Messinger and San Francisco Supervisor Harry Britt. But their dwindling level of activity within DSA in the past few years indicates that they are members out of a feeling of obligation and commitment to principles shared by most members of the organization. This is to these leaders' credit, but they and we would be better off if they were members because DSA was a vital element in their lives as successful politicians and leaders, if it were a two-way street.

If Walter Mondale and Geraldine Ferraro win in November—and unlike most people, we think they have a very good chance—there will be exciting opportunities for the development of a left coalition politics within the Democratic Party. As Michael Harrington pointed out in San Francisco—and on this we agree with him—a left politics will be needed because Walter Mondale, having no answers, has been pulled along by the party's rightward drift of recent years. Within that context there will be room for a socialist tendency, but it won't be taken seriously until it begins to build a popular following by electing its own people to state legislatures and Congress.

HEALING

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, I WAS ON THE verge of cancelling my subscription to *In These Times* because I was enraged at the unfair bias against Jews, particularly in articles by Diana Johnstone. Since then the article discussing black anti-Semitism has appeared, and the coverage of Israel by David Mandel and others seems to me more objective than the simplistic spouting of Arab propaganda I found in Johnstone's articles. I now feel that I can renew my subscription and make a contribution without having to betray my Jewish heritage and beliefs.

In the words of Jesse Jackson in his eloquent speech to the Democratic convention on July 17, it is time for all of us to move to "higher ground." As he noted, Jews have a tradition of caring for human welfare, as well as a history of being oppressed. The Rainbow needs all of us, and we need the Rainbow. It is time for a change, and that change needs to begin with examination and transformation of the sources of hate and prejudice in each of us.

—Devera Black
South Salem, N.Y.

SOLIDARITY

WE THE UNDERSIGNED STRONGLY urge the Polish government to halt the judicial proceedings against the imprisoned activists of KOR (Workers' Defense Committee)—Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, Zbigniew Romaszewski and Henryk Wujec. We further urge the unconditional release of these four prisoners, as well as these seven leaders of Solidarity: Jan Rulewski, Karol Modzelewski, Marian Jurczyk, Andrzej Gwiazda, Grzegorz Palka, Seweryn Jaworski and Andrzej Rozplochowski, who continue to be held without indictment or trial, and the hundreds of other political prisoners remaining in Polish jails.

As the Polish state prosecutor's indictment makes clear, the only charge against the four activists is their agitation and organization for political and social reform. As trade unionists and activists in the movements for civil rights, civil liberties and disarmament in our own country, we oppose this trial as a violation of basic human rights.

We are also moved, however, by the fear that this trial can only deepen the Cold War atmosphere and provide encouragement for our own government's increasingly militarist actions in Central America and elsewhere. Conversely, a positive response to international public opinion on this issue will make it more difficult for our government to ignore the outrage provoked by its military escalation and violations of human rights at home and abroad. Out of concern for these prisoners and for the international consequences of the threatened trial, we have sent a protest to the Polish Prime Minister, Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, demanding the withdrawal of all charges.

—Gail Daneker, Co-Director, Campaign for Peace and Democracy/East and West

—Richard Deats, Executive Secretary, Fellowship of Reconciliation

—David Dyson, Union Label Dept., Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union

—Daniel Ellsberg

—Melinda Fine

—Lee Grant

—Richard Healey, Director, Coalition for a New Foreign and Military Policy

—Grace Hedemann, War Resisters League

—Grace Paley

—Paul Robeson Jr.

—I.F. Stone

—Raoul Tellhet, President, California Federation of Teachers
(organizations listed for identification only)

PASTORA

JOHN JUDIS' ARTICLE ON EDEN Pastora (*ITT*, July 11) seems thinly veiled apologia. Beyond the obvious questions, isn't it ridiculous to expect the

Sandinistas not to put him on trial, considering the state of warfare in Nicaragua?

I question some of Judis' history. Pastora certainly was not a "founder" of the "Sandinista opposition" in 1959—Tomas Borge is the only survivor of that group. Pastora at the time was an activist in the Conservative Party, an opposition group to Somoza that had been discredited by its paltry attempts at resistance.

I don't know about Judis' claim of Pastora's "retiring from guerrilla warfare" in 1974. I thought he spent many of those years as a businessman. Finally, by the time Pastora became commander of the Sandinista "Southern Front," there was in effect no "tercerista" faction with which he could align himself. This was the final stage of the revolution—the internal factional disputes had ended.

These points are only important because of the attempts of many to resurrect Pastora as a "true Sandinista." Facts are hard to come by. Perhaps some of mine are wrong, too.

—Bruce Bernstein
Flushing, N.Y.

SPREAD IT AROUND

I STRONGLY URGE THAT YOU TAKE whatever steps are necessary to get into the hands of every member of Congress, plus other appropriate groups such as the Mondale campaign organization, the excellent article on "Deadly Connections" by Diana Johnstone (*ITT*, July 11). This is the most informative and significant article I have read on the subject of Euromissiles.

—John B. Massen
San Francisco

QUERY

FOR A DISSERTATION ON THE SDS Economic Research and Action Project in the mid-1960s, I would like to hear from people involved in the ERAP effort, especially the Cleveland project. Please write me in care of the American Studies Program, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio 44106.

—Ken Rose
Cleveland

ADDICTED

DIANA JOHNSTONE'S MASTERLY piece on "Deadly Connections" (*ITT*, July 11) leads me to write a fan letter I've had in mind for a long time.

I write in part as a lifelong addict of broad global reporting such as hers, as a son of Louis Fischer who did a like kind of reporting out of Moscow in the '30s for *The Nation*. Most of all I want to cheer and thank Diana Johnstone for uniquely deep, strong and clear reporting on all parts of Europe, on how Europe fits into the world and into all that we do in the U.S. The "Deadly Connections" roundup only highlights a long series of topnotch pieces on feminists as well as missiles, Britain as well as France, Germany and Benelux and Scandinavia as well as the Mediterranean, Solidarity as well as the Socialist International.

More power to you, Diana! And for keeping her at it, more power to you, *ITT*!

—George Fischer
Woodstock, N.Y.

SPADES

IT'S DEPRESSING TO SEE CHRIS Norton apologizing for the forced guerrilla recruitment in El Salvador (*ITT*, June 27). But his reasoning is even more depressing. So what if it is "not on as large a scale as the army"? What can he mean when he says "there is now a war between two armies, and...as an army, the FMLN has the right to recruit"? The same argument could be made on the other side, where Norton surely

LETTERS

In These Times is an independent newspaper committed to democratic pluralism and to helping build a popular movement for socialism in the United States. Our pages are open to a wide range of views on the left, both socialist and non-socialist. Except for editorial statements appearing on the editorial page, opinions expressed in columns and in feature or news stories are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the editors. We welcome comments and opinion pieces from our readers.

would reject it. And does Norton seriously believe that "recruits can leave after about a month if they don't like being with the guerrillas"? "Recruits"? If they don't "like" "being with" the guerrillas? After "about" a month? Who's he kidding?

Call a spade a spade. This impression might be justified as a necessary evil, but simple decency requires that it be recognized as evil. The argument that "the end justifies the means" has been a pitfall for the left too often in the past. Let's not repeat it.

—Anthony Weston
Poughkeepsie, N.Y.

TENDER COMRADES

I AM PRODUCING A FEATURE-LENGTH independent documentary entitled *Tender Comrades*. The film traces the life and times through the '30s, '40s and into the '50s of those Hollywood screenwriters, actors and directors who were later blacklisted. In essence, the film is a group portrait of a generation of Hollywood activists, through their and the movies' most fertile years.

Archival research is essential to this project, but we are also hoping to reach individuals who may have home movies, photos, or newsreels of Los Angeles demonstrations, anti-fascist rallies and Hollywood Guild activities from the '30s and '40s. If any of your readers have collected or know of material like this, they should call (213) 821-2597 and leave a message, or write: Penumbra Films, 2322 Clement Ave., Venice, CA 90291.

—Kenneth Mate
Venice, Calif.

ENGLISH PROPAGANDA

IF HIS REVIEW OF THE MARGARET AND James Jacob book, *The Origins of Anglo-American Radicalism* (*ITT*, July 25) fully represents his views, Edward Countryman surely teaches a propagandized version of American history at the University of Warwick.

Even King George III of England

called the American Revolution of 1776 an Irish Presbyterian war! But Countryman does not mention the ethnic aspect of our inheritances from the inhabitants of the British Isles. He says: "Anglo-American public culture was a single fabric." It surely was not such in the British Isles, and the "British" who came to what is now the United States imported their democratic tendencies from having fought against the classism and ethnocentrism of the English.

Countryman apparently has not taken into consideration the brutal clearances of Scottish and Welsh lands so that proprietors might more profitably raise sheep. What about the four Irish holocausts, those of the Elizabethan period, the Cromwellian period, the 1740s and the 1840s when millions of the Irish were starved or driven out of Ireland by English policies? Our radical traditions owe much positively to the Irish, Scots and Welsh as well as to the Huguenots, German dissenters and other ethnic groups, but very little positively to the English.

What nonsense it is to say that the English "established a bastion of personal rights against the state that commands respect as much now as then," referring to the Glorious Revolution of 1688-89. The class-ridden and ethnocentric courts of the United Kingdom have not yet heard of such rights. Just recently the House of Lords as the supreme court of the realm upheld the right of police to shoot and kill on suspicion or to kill through the use of such murderous "crowd control" devices as plastic bullets. Irish and West Indian immigrants in London are afraid to ask for police protection; they too often get police mayhem.

—Alfred McClung Lee
(author of *Terrorism in Northern Ireland*)
Madison, N.J.

Editor's note: Please try to keep letters under 250 words in length. Otherwise we may have to make drastic cuts, which may change what you want to say. Also, if possible, please type and double-space letters—or at least write clearly and with wide margins.

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PERSPECTIVES

By Phillip Frazer

LAST MONTH GENERAL Electric notified 400 workers in Charleston, S.C., that its plant there would be closed and all jobs terminated by June 1985. The facility makes equipment for nuclear power plants, the demand for which has collapsed. For several weeks after receiving that notification the workers and their union—United Electrical local 1202—campaign against the GE plan. “We lambasted GE on the tax breaks they got,” says Lance Compa, Washington representative of the UE, “and we argued that there was still demand from conventional power plants. But,” he adds, “it was all a defensive, oppositional-style campaign.”

That was before Compa attended the first International Economic Conversion

campaign was mostly rhetorical,” Compa reports. “The value of conversion is that it puts it on a positive footing. Now we’re not just analyzing why the company is a bunch of bastards, we’re analyzing what the plant can do. Our leaders and our members have real tasks instead of hopelessness. We’re putting forward proposals and pushing them.”

No one knows how many such tales of conversion have flowed—or will flow—from that Boston conference. But this may be just one of many to come from the gathering of 750 peace activists, unionists and academics from the U.S. and 19 other countries. In all, more than 100 people came from Europe, Asia, Canada and Africa, adding to an already exciting mix of labor and peace people—half of them women—engaged in a rare outbreak of solidarity and networking.

Among those invited by conference organizers Suzanne Gordon and Tony Mulvaney were 15 British municipal govern-

ment Labour Party councils. At the Boston conference Phil Asquith, who is principal Product Development Engineer for the Sheffield City Council, drew a packed house and a standing ovation when he recounted his experiences as a co-drafter of the Lucas plan. Asquith is now running a program in Sheffield to utilize the local unemployed, and an abandoned factory, to manufacture dehumidifiers from the 93,000 Council homes infested with a rotting black mold. Sheffield used to be a thriving steel-producer, and while the city’s vast unemployment—and the mold—are not directly military-related, “conversion” has been expanded to include any worker or community initiated program to redirect production to fill social needs.

“What we want to do,” Asquith says, “is create, in microcosm, a viable local economy that bypasses the most pernicious effects of the kind of market economy that exports unemployment, disenfranchises poor and working-class citizens and spends more money developing weapons of destruction than satisfying human needs. This working economy,” he hopes, “will serve as a prototype that can be elaborated upon and replicated when a sympathetic national government takes office.” Asquith, who is a youthful-looking, articulate politician, was, of course, addressing himself to the British situation.

Reverse conversion.

Since employment rates and profits have been declining through much of Europe for most of the past decade, governments have increasingly been funding industry to “reverse convert,” from highly competitive civilian product lines to arms manufacture.

At the Blohm and Voss shipyard in Hamburg, Germany, workers led by their union have distributed conversion plans to management, the media, and to local government—in hopes of pre-empting plans to “reverse convert” to production of naval vessels. Their plan is to design and build windmills on ships anchored offshore in order to generate enough energy to replace the 700 megawatt nuclear power plant that now serves the city.

Similar efforts are underway in Italy, Austria, the Netherlands, France, Scandinavia and Canada. The London City Council (which Prime Minister Thatcher wants to abolish) has instituted a program that invests \$42 million annually in rehabilitative industrial projects, retraining, research and planning and public education.

The Boston conference brought many of the principals in these and other European initiatives into direct contact with members of such American unions as the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE), United Steelworkers of America, United Autoworkers (UAW), International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Technical, Salaried and Machine Workers, Communications Workers of America (CWA), the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME)—30 in all, as well as 19 foreign unions—and local peace activists.

Machinists President William Winpisinger delivered a brief pep talk on the necessity of building for conversion from the shop floor up. His union recently surveyed its members—many of whom hold military-related jobs—so as to identify the “shopfloor inventors” in their ranks. The results showed, according to Winpisinger, that “we can probably undertake local economic conversion—alternative production planning projects—without corporate or professional engineering and management help.”

For their part, national disarmament groups such as the Freeze, SANE, Clergy and Laity Concerned, the American Friends Service Committee, Jobs with

Peace and the Mobilization for Survival have all recently endorsed policies of promoting conversion whenever they address the issue of cutting the Pentagon budget. A recent notice mailed to all branches by the National Committee of the Freeze declared that “the National Freeze Campaign supports income and retraining benefits for workers and alternate production planning by labor, industry and the community.”

Presently, two bills to provide federal assistance for conversion initiatives are before the House—HR4805 sponsored by Nick Mavroules (D-MA) and HR425 written by Ted Wein (D-NY). Both Mavroules and Weiss addressed the Boston conference where Mavroules was given a

The Machinists union is surveying its members to develop local conversion plans based on their own experience.

longer-than-average standing ovation for his successful pressuring of the State Department to gain admission for the 100 European invitees deemed politically undesirable by the Reagan administration. (Both the French and Italian governments also intervened to force the U.S. to issue visas to the 10.)

Addressing the House last February 8, Mavroules recalled how, at the end of the Vietnam defense spending spree, 44 percent of his New England constituency’s aerospace workers lost their jobs. His bill calls for:

- One year’s warning by the Defense Department to communities affected by a planned defense contract cut-back.

- A grant of up to \$250,000 to communities hit by reductions of \$10 million or more, to be used for worker retraining and to fund planning for plant conversion.

- Income guarantees for up to two years for laid-off defense workers, to encourage them to stay in their communities and help build alternative industries.

Mavroules argues that his bill would cost no new federal dollars. “According to the Congressional Budget Office,” he says, “the cost...for one lost contract would be about \$1 million.” This for a contract that would have added \$9 million to the government deficit. “Compared to the compensation Rockwell received in 1977 for the lost B-1 bomber contract (\$750 million),” Mavroules told the House, “\$1 million is not much to ask for the defense worker and his community.”

The Weiss bill is generally perceived to have more teeth—and less chance of passing. It contains many of the Mavroules provisions as well as providing for:

- Ongoing alternative use committees in military-related facilities to develop detailed conversion plans—including representatives of labor, business and the community; and

- A Federal Defense Economic Adjustment Council to provide conversion guidelines, resources and overall coordination—with a mandate to prepare for non-defense public projects “addressing vital areas of national concern,” such as transportation, housing, education, health care, environmental protection and renewable energy resources.

In the Weiss plan, defense contractors would be required to contribute 1.25 percent of their contract revenues to a fund to pay for the program.

As economic advisor to the German Green Party Joachim Muller told the Boston conference: “You cannot get far in conversion without some government funding, but you must keep control in the hands of the workforce and the community if you are to go beyond the old options of wage-slavery or lemon socialism.”

American unions are thinking about local conversion



William Winpisinger, Machinists union president

Conference at Boston College June 23-24. “Conversion” means the re-casting of a factory and the retraining of its workforce to produce “socially-useful” goods instead of military-related output.

At that conference Compa heard several speakers from Europe recounting their efforts to prevent plant closings by proposing alternative uses for the facilities. One of those speakers was Bill Niven, director of the London Conversion Council. And in the days following the conference Niven flew with Compa to South Carolina and addressed the executive board of the union local as well as the factory workforce. His tales of workers who had taken their future in their own hands in Europe inspired his listeners to form an alternative use committee. It is now preparing a skills and equipment assessment of the plant in the hope that they’ll be able to use the otherwise doomed equipment to produce products their community needs.

“Up until now our opposition cam-

ment and union members, 15 German, 13 Italian and several French labor organizers, as well as representatives from Austria, Greece, Japan, Sweden, India, Canada, Australia and South Africa. The movement to confront the jobs-for-bombs tradeoff blackmail practiced by militaristic governments worldwide is just beginning in this country, but there have been some landmark victories in Europe.

The British example.

Thousands of workers at Lucas Aerospace plants in England in 1975 responded to the threatened closure of their worksites by drafting a plan to convert production toward socially useful goods. Lucas was, and still is, Europe’s largest aerospace equipment manufacturer. Although Lucas finally rejected the workers’ proposals, the confrontation came to be seen as the birth of the movement. Several leaders of the Lucas workers’ committee are now running “enterprise boards” for British municipalities with

By Alexander Amerisov

THE EXTENT OF PARALYSIS on the left in the advanced capitalist countries, especially the United States, is reflected in the lack of reaction to the pain and suffering of tens of thousands of Soviet and Eastern European dissidents. Academic Andrei Sakharov and his family are a case in point.

The movement for greater democracy has existed in the Soviet Union for the last 20 or so years. Thousands of courageous and selfless people have been jailed, exiled internally, forced abroad, dismissed from their jobs and publicly ostracized. As an open dissident for 20 years Sakharov had been a shining example of individual dedication to this cause. A "father" of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, Sakharov stopped his work in the late '60s and turned his energy to a struggle for world peace and democracy. Ever since, he has been a pariah to the Soviet establishment. One by one, dozens by dozens, thousands by thousands, Soviet dissidents have been led to prisons or labor camps. Many were beaten, humiliated or exiled to foreign lands. Through all of this, the voices of socialists abroad had been almost silent.

Right-wing elements of capitalist countries are the main contingent that have given support to Soviet dissidents. This support comes, not as a result of their great love for freedom and democracy,

this socialism exists not as a classless and self-governing society, but one that is class-divided and despotically ruled.

The establishment and growth of antagonistic classes in Soviet society was taking place virtually from day one, but it took the appearance of a new type of opposition to make this clear outside the country, even though the existence of class differences has long been understood by the vast majority of Soviet people.

The appearance of the Soviet democratic movement in the '60s was the turning point, not only in the internal development of that society, but also in the world socialist movement. The people who make up the present Soviet democratic movement represent not only themselves, but also much broader social interests and groups. They are the torchbearers of social progress in the Soviet Union. This movement for greater democracy represents a new, radically different stage of development of "presently existing" socialism. There should not be any doubt as to its potential longevity. Even if the KGB is able to crush the present contingent of the movement, it will only temporarily be stopped. A new wave of dissidents will arise, and it will be better organized and more determined.

To understand Soviet society properly, you must live abroad. Inside that country objective research is not possible. Access even to such historic and once publicly available documents as Stalin's, Trotsky's, Bukharin's and other "disgraced"

PERSPECTIVES

A Soviet socialist exile sees the Cold War stifling dissent

to real "rights" and "freedoms." Material progress has no meaning in itself for socialists. Creation of conditions for the fullest realization of the great potential of every individual and of society as a whole—symbolized most clearly in the slogans "Liberty," "Equality" and "Fraternity"—is the end for which improvement of economic conditions is only the means.

Peace and democracy.

The movement for democratic rights and freedoms is inevitably linked to the movement for peace. It is linked not only because democracy itself is impossible during war, but also because war is impossible between two really democratic communities.

Real democracy does not exist, nor can

it exist on the basis of monopoly capitalism or presently existing state socialism. This does not mean, however, that capitalist and state socialist nations have the same motives for peace and war. In fact, if both superpowers stopped interfering in the internal affairs of other nations, victory would almost automatically go to state socialism.

Under the present conditions developing countries don't have much choice. The Soviet Union need not intervene abroad for the spread of state socialism to continue, because placing the meager means of production backward countries possess in the hands of the state—so to strengthen their ability to compete with advanced capitalist countries—is a "natural" solution to their problems of underdevelopment.

The Soviet Union has nothing to gain by waging war for expansion of its "sphere of influence," though certain circles in that country benefit from global tensions. This tension is their reason for existence and the source of continuation of their privileges and positions in that society.

The new problems of the Sakharovs and the multitude of other dissidents are closely linked with the international rise of tensions. The struggle for peace, and its most important task of removing Reagan from the presidential office is at the same time the struggle for real democracy in the Soviet Union. And the struggle for democracy in the Soviet Union is at the same time a struggle for the real socialism world-wide.

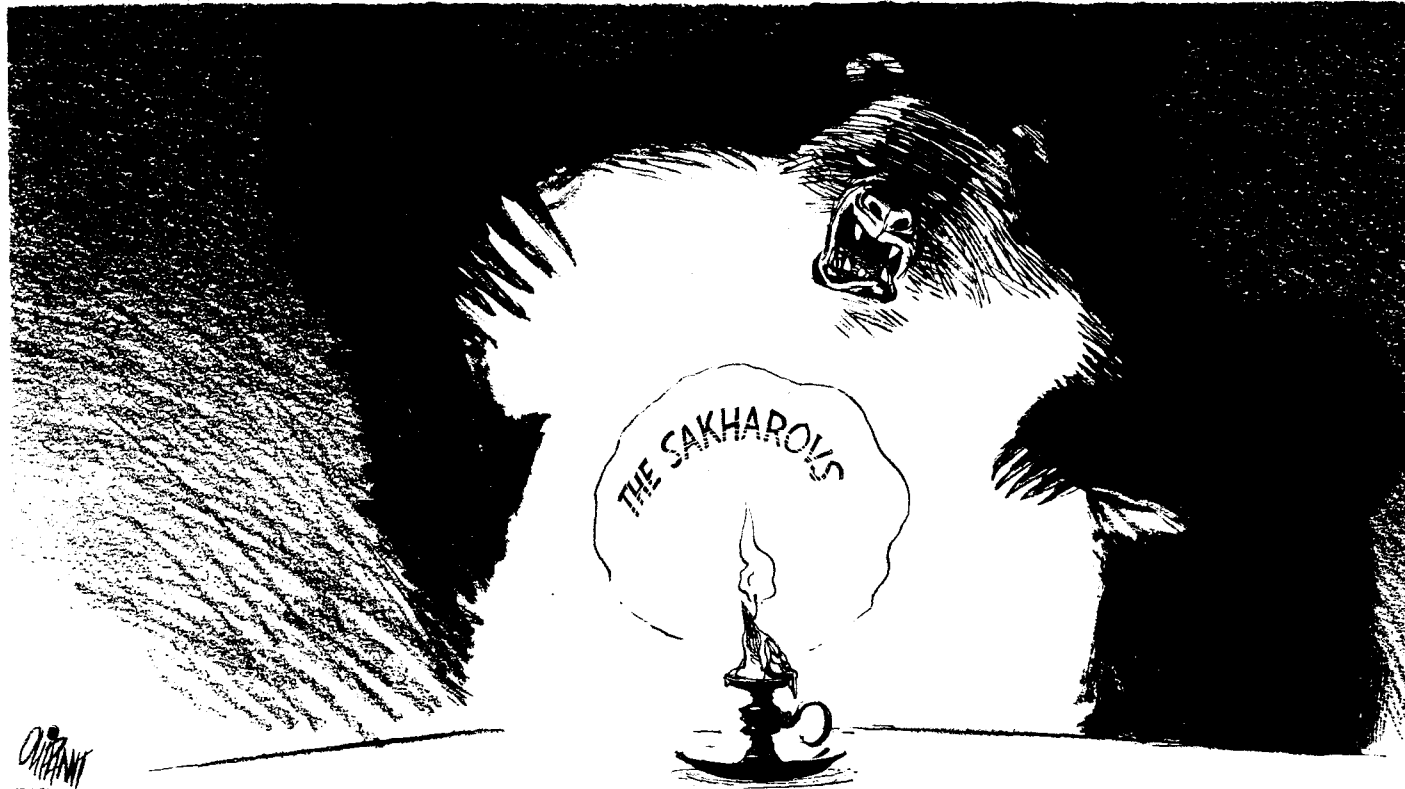
Socialists now face several tests. First, how much must we do to get Reagan out of office? Second, what and how much do we do to enable the democratic movement in the Soviet Union to keep fighting for greater freedoms and against the party-state? Third, what and how much do we do for international solidarity of working peoples world-wide, and especially between the working classes of the Soviet Union and the U.S.?

Unfortunately, if the first and third areas are more or less "saturated" with socialists, the second area, assistance to the democratic movement in the Soviet Union, suffers greatly.

We should establish a socialist pen club to correspond with democratic socialists in the Soviet Union and other countries of "presently existing" socialism. We should condemn the treatment of the dissidents in those countries at every opportunity. In doing so, we must not forget to underline that beside being democratic, our criticism is also socialist—pointing out class divisions in that society and inequalities on which repression is based. We should assist the movement financially and by providing logistical aid in producing and delivering socialist literature for distribution.

If we limit demands for workers' power, for real democracy, only to capitalist countries and overlook the total disregard and flagrant violation of basic democratic and human rights in countries of "presently existing socialism," we will undermine the strength of the socialist ideal by stripping it of its most powerful element—universality. Socialism can't exist in one country or a group of countries. It can exist only as a universal phenomenon. Let's not forget it. Stand up for the Sakharovs!

Alexander Amerisov is a Soviet exile now living in the United States.



FEAR OF LIGHT.

but because of their never ceasing hostility to anything socialist. Is it surprising to anyone, then, that having nobody on the left to turn to for help, most of the opposition movements in the Soviet Union have turned to the right, thereby undermining their own position with a Soviet public that sees no benefit in the restoration of capitalism, and at the same time creating doubts in the minds of Western socialists as to the dissidents' true intent?

For many decades after the Russian Revolution, socialists on the whole defended the new republic, willingly overlooking numerous expressions of despotism in that society.

The first socialist society deserved such support as long as its external and internal enemies consisted primarily of former ruling classes trying to re-establish their privileged positions. And, in fact, the Soviet Union has done a remarkable job of rebuilding and defending itself. At the cost of tremendous sacrifices the Soviet people have accomplished spectacular progress in all aspects of their social and economic life and deserve the admiration of all progressive humanity.

But nothing remains the same. What was once reactionary and old rejuvenates through revolution, blood and tears. In its turn it may become old and reactionary. In the Soviet Union the threat of restoration of capitalism has long passed. Socialism (unfortunately, a despotic socialism) has firmly established itself. But

historic figures' writings is only by special permission. The same goes for books and articles of many foreign authors. Even some of the official Soviet statistics known in the West are hard to get there. On the other hand, studying any country from outside has its problems. Money, time, proximity to a major library that carries such literature are the minor technical difficulties. Disconnection, which is fraught with the danger of formalism and lack of sufficiently intense debate are some of the other more fundamental barriers.

Nonetheless, Marxists should never lose sight of our main goal—the fullest possible human freedom, equality and international brotherhood of working people. No economic achievement is worth an ounce of human freedom, even though freedom itself is not possible without economic prosperity. In conditions of poverty and unemployment there cannot be any freedom other than freedom for the few and despotism for the many. For democratic socialists, however, as soon as the most rudimentary material needs of the society have been fulfilled, the fullest and the broadest possible freedom must become the slogan of the day. By emphasizing the material gains of presently existing socialism, some on the left allow themselves to forget that it is not some specific economic achievement that is our goal, but the creation of material conditions that lead

The Soviet Union has nothing to gain from war for expansion, but ruling circles benefit from global tensions. It is a source of their continued privileges. The Sakharovs' and other dissidents' new problems are closely linked to the international rise in tensions.

ESSAYS

On becoming a writer

Second Words. Selected Critical Prose

By Margaret Atwood
Beacan Press, 448 pp., \$9.95
paper

By Karen Rosenberg

"Each piece of writing changes the writer," poet/novelist Margaret Atwood once said. "Reading is also a process and it also changes you." *Second Words*, a collection of Atwood's critical essays and reviews composed over the last 20-odd years, is a seismographic record of what literary statements have shaken her. With an admirable lack of competitiveness, this author has allowed herself to be touched by her literary contemporaries. In

known Canadian authors, including Marie-Claire Blais, Margaret Laurence, Timothy Findley and Al Purdy.

More than lists, I got an explanation for why these are Atwood's favorite authors. A former student of literary-systems-builder Northrop Frye, she is attracted to writers who create myths (in Blais' *Mad Shadows*, Atwood finds Narcissus) and who conjure up monsters from Eskimo or native American legends. She is also drawn to Alexis Deveaux and Ntozake Shange and other black American women authors who see writing as "saving myths, the naming of forgotten pasts, the telling of truths."

In part, her taste reflects her

folk forms, she thinks, is the literature that can affect people.

But, wisely, Atwood poses the thorny question of "what you do about roots or traditions that stem from oppression; that is, how do you retain your identity without also retaining the oppression?" That is the dilemma faced by black writers, women writers, Canadian writers and others whose history and mythology is imbued with the self as victim.

In *Survival: A Thematic Guide to Canadian Literature*, a full-length study published in 1972, Atwood listed four basic positions taken by victims, whether countries, groups or individuals. Reviewed in *Second Words*, they are: "1. to deny that you are a

her native Canada, she has increasingly seen their applicability to women. Feminists caught this parallel early on, when Atwood still resisted it. In 1973, she was writing, "If Adrienne Rich were not a good poet, it would be easy to classify her as just another vocal Women's Libber, substituting polemic for poetry, simplistic messages for complex meanings." Atwood was also translating her victim categories "into Women's Lib terms, just for fun." (Fun.) Like some successful women who made it in a non-feminist culture (Atwood was born in '39), she was initially uncomfortable with the women's movement. "There's a great temptation to say to Women's Lib, 'Where were you when I really needed you?' or 'It's too late for me now,'" she wrote in '76. Fortunately, she has resisted that temptation and in her later writings has dropped the condescending, even nasty, "Lib" and "Libber."

She still resents—and rightly, I think—critics who demand that female novelists provide stirring stories of female successes and tough-but-wise heroines. Well-behaved male heroes are generally incredibly dull, says Atwood, who (to pass her Ph.D. orals) actually made it to page 900 of Samuel Richardson's soporific *Sir Charles Grandison*, while Melville's fascinating, enigmatic Captain Ahab, "although a forceful literary character, is hardly anybody's idea of an acceptable role model."

To her credit, Atwood wants to write great literature, and not the feminist equivalent of socialist realism. But because her fiction presents dependent and even self-loathing female characters, it has repeatedly been called too pessimistic, depressing. In these pages, Atwood counters that it is foolish, and perhaps even dangerous, to wish defeatism, alienation and victimization away.

Predictably, these conclusions came slowly and through intellectual struggle. For Atwood, as for many others, an understanding of oppression as well as strategies for avoiding it were borrowed, ironically, from the oppressor. (How much of the ex-colonial intelligentsia not living in the Third World imbibed nationalism or Marxism directly from the breast of the "mother country"?) In the fall of 1962, studying on a grant at Harvard/Radcliffe, Atwood read Puritan sermons and political treatises circa 1776 that called the U.S. culturally inferior and sought a genius to prove the country's worth. "It sounded familiar," she recalls in *Second Words*. "It was at Harvard that I first began to think seriously about Canada."

And she wasn't alone. A generation of young Canadian intellectuals were deciding "not from necessity but by choice" to leave New York, London and Paris and not even publish there, as their predecessors had done. In Toronto and Vancouver, as well as Montreal, they set about to learn their history. "If old American laundry lists were of interest at Harvard why should not old Canadian laundry lists be of interest in Toronto, where they so blatantly weren't?" And Atwood and friends turned to Canadian literature, past and present, for a sense of identity.

Why literature? Primarily because, as Atwood remembers, "most of us were apolitical art-for-art's-sakers when we set out." It was the early '60s—the time of mimeoed "little maga-

zines" and jazz, black stockings, no make-up, Sartre and Beckett. Atwood's hostility to the word "political" is obvious in her early essays, where it connotes stridency and self-righteousness. By 1965, she had read Betty Friedan and Simone de Beauvoir, but "behind locked doors"; *The Edible Woman*, published that year, she later dubbed a "protofeminist rather than just feminist" novel.

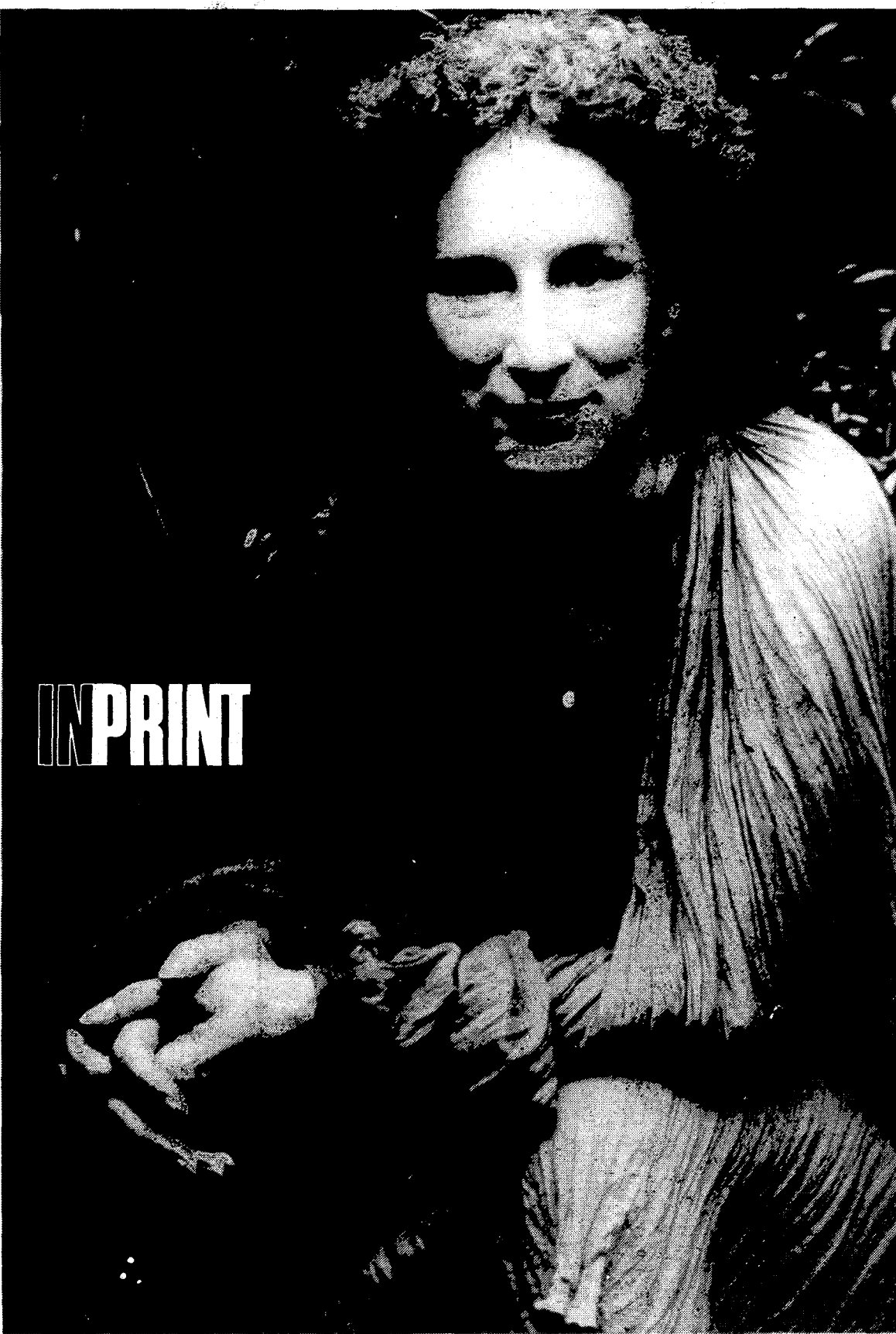
Yet her writing and reading gradually led her to consider the relationship between the victim and society, the poet and society. "I began as a profoundly apolitical writer, but then I began to do what all novelists and some poets do: I began to describe the world around me." Literature, in other words, brought her to politics, because it made her a more careful observer and witness of events.

"When you are a fiction writer, you're confronted every day with the question that confronted, among others, George Eliot and Dostoevsky: what kind of world shall you describe for your readers? The one you see around you, or the better one you can imagine? If only the latter, you'll be unrealistic; if only the former, despairing. But it is by the better world we can imagine that we judge the world we have." Clearly, Atwood understands the need for positive values in literature; it's just that she chooses not to embody them in goody-goody characters.

What has taken root in Atwood's critical universe is this

"I began as a profoundly apolitical writer, but then I began to do what all novelists do: I began to describe the world around me."

—Atwood



Gracine Gibson

Margaret Atwood (above) was initially very uncomfortable with the women's movement.

Second Words, one can almost hear the concentration and intensity with which Margaret Atwood reads.

Many of the authors this Canadian writer has listened to are familiar names in the U.S.: Adrienne Rich, Kate Millett, E.L. Doctorow, Nadine Gordimer, Marge Piercy, Anne Sexton, Tillie Olsen, Sylvia Plath, Ann Beattie. But she also writes of less-

own history (her parents were great storytellers, and she had a childhood passion for Mary Marvel comic books) and her grotesque fantastic novels such as *The Edible Woman*, *Surfacing* and *Lady Oracle*. But she also values modernized myths about Canadian monsters or witches because they speak to the community from which they sprang. Literature that employs popular

victim. 2. to acknowledge that you are a victim but explain this as an Act of Fate, the will of God, or any other large general powerful idea. 3. to acknowledge that you are a victim, but refuse to accept the assumption that the role is inevitable. 4. to be a creative non-victim."

Although Atwood formulated her thoughts on victimization when dealing with the identity of

sense (so strong in the 19th century, but certainly not invented then) of literature as a guardian, even "the guardian of the moral and ethical sense of the community." In "An End to Audience?" which is perhaps the strongest essay here, Atwood insists that the notion—commonly found in creative writing programs—of poetry and fiction as mere personal self-expression, lets writers, and readers, off the hook: if that's all they are, then no one has to pay serious attention to literature. But if the written word allows you to see the world from another perspective—from that of the victim, for example—then it exists not just for recreation.

"If writing novels—and reading them—have any social value, it's probably that they force you to imagine what it's like to be somebody else. Which, increasingly, is something we all need to know."

Karen Rosenberg has written on Margaret Atwood for *Equal Times* and *Radcliffe Quarterly*.

Can Pakistan Survive?: The Death of a State

By Tariq Ali
Verso Editions/NLB (Schocken),
237 pp., \$7.95

By C.M. Naim

[Pakistan is] one of the few nation-states deprived of a fictitious air of inevitability: it does not have the appearance of a country that was meant to be.

—Lawrence Ziring, *Pakistan: The Enigma of Political Development*

Created in 1947 in the name of a nationalism defined in religious terms (Islam), Pakistan consisted of two "wings" containing those areas of British India that had Muslim majority populations. M.A. Jinnah, Pakistan's "Father of the Nation," had sought a federal system in a united India as late as 1946, but had been frustrated in his efforts on the one hand by Hindu communalists and on the other by "progressive" nationalists, both of whom wanted a strong center and weak provinces.

What Jinnah finally obtained, however, was a "moth-eaten and mutilated" Pakistan. Its most populated and advanced provinces—Bengal and Punjab—were partitioned on bloody lines. The exodus of most of Pakistan's non-Muslim population had also not been foreseen by Muslim leaders.

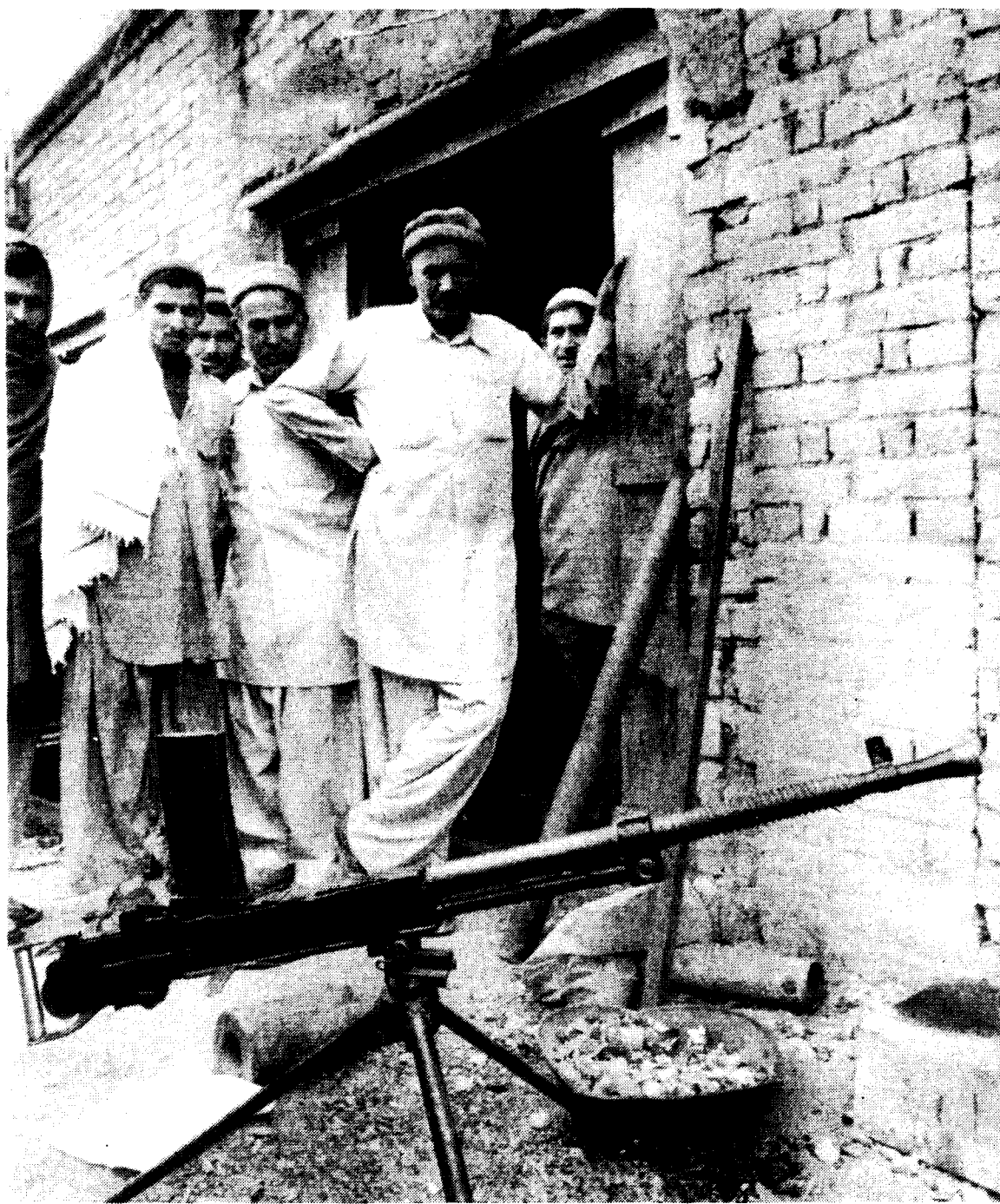
The movement that led to Pakistan's creation had been led primarily by people from the Muslim minority provinces (now a part of India). In fact, a substantial number of the indigenous elites of the Muslim majority areas had at one time opposed the creation of Pakistan, but were overwhelmed by forces that made the division of India inevitable. Thus it was that Jinnah and his Muslim League came to power under circumstances that included antagonistic forces representing regional aspirations.

Evidence suggests that Jinnah wanted the new nation to be a secular, democratic state, but was destined to be frustrated. His exploitation of the religious sentiments of the Muslim masses—the cry that Islam was in danger and that the Muslims of India were a separate nation—strengthened the hold of those obscurantist religious leaders who opposed secularism and later came to dominate Pakistan's polity. The man who had championed state rights and constitutional government before 1947 now preferred to run the new nation by appointing governors and civil servants and not electing representatives from the populace. He may have viewed these measures as temporary, but the damage had already been done.

Jinnah died in 1948 and his right-hand man was assassinated in 1951. The civil service then took control and ruled the country with the army's help. But that situation changed in 1958 when the army began to dominate and the rule of the Field Marshall began.

This phase ended in 1971 with the breakup of the country and the emergence of a separate Bangladesh. In that year Z.A. Bhutto began his rule over Pakistan as a civilian martial law administrator. Bhutto had gained his pre-eminent position because he had opposed martial law and raised the cynical but potent slogan: "Islam is our faith. Democracy is our policy. Socialism is our economy. All power to the people."

His politics had not let the ma-



Pakistanis protect themselves as civil strife continues. Many in minority provinces oppose their lack of political representation.

SOUTH ASIA

Pakistan today: a nation and a people divided

majority population of Pakistan—the Bengalis—break the hegemonic hold of the West Pakistani elite dominating the army and the civil service. Bhutto did not move away from a centralized, autocratic style of government. Even after giving Pakistan a democratic constitution, he continued to use the army and the bureaucracy in the same way. But in 1977 democratic forces began to gain strength and seemed on the verge of winning some of their demands, so the army made another swift move. General Ziaul Haq declared martial law "to save the country," and promised to hold free elections within 90 days. That was almost seven years ago and the elections still have not been held. He most recently promised to hold them in spring of 1985.

The new military dictator has systematically brutalized the people, and has garnered all legislative powers; he has said that he would write a new constitution, single-handedly, if necessary. The executive branch has been inexorably penetrated by the army. In addition to the active army personnel administering martial law, a quota of jobs in ministries and departments are now reserved for ex-servicemen. The judiciary's unitary nature has

been destroyed, first by the all powerful martial law and second by the new "Shari'at" (Islamic law) courts. Zia has cloaked his draconian actions in the ragbag of his own Islamicism and has said that Pakistan is going to be an Islamic state.

Two threats.

Tariq Ali, longtime journalist and political analyst of Pakistan, claims in his latest book that Pakistan may not even survive as a state. Ali believes there are two threats to the nation's future. First, there is a regional disbalance in the constitution of the hegemonic groups due to the predominance of the Punjabis in both the army and the civil service. It has repeatedly frustrated the aspirations of the other three regions. Ali writes, "The main reason for the smoldering national discontent in Pakistan's three minority provinces [i.e., Sindh, NWFP and Baluchistan] is political discrimination. The refusal to tolerate representative governments in the provinces has exacerbated the problem tenfold."

Later he writes, "Islam did not prove strong enough to hold East and West Pakistan together. Why should it then become the cement to unite the remaining

four provinces?" Why indeed, one asks, particularly when the current "Islamic" martial law seems to have added sectarian dissension to the long list of economic and social justice issues already straining the nation-building process in Pakistan.

But obviously Pakistan today is different from Pakistan of 1971. Presently, constituent parts are not only contiguous but, in linguistic, ethnic and economic terms, more closely interlinked. The Pathans and the Baluch form large sections in the urban labor classes in Sindh, while the rural Punjab and the rural Sindh are part of a single cultural continuum of one eco-system. Also, the central government accrues credit as it caters to the needs and desires of the Pakistanis working abroad. According to one estimate, more than two million Pakistanis worked in foreign countries in 1982—some 1.3 million in the Mideast. Their estimated remittances home in 1982 were \$3.7 billion. The network of families dependent on foreign payments and other advantages offered to them by the central government are likely to bolster the feeling of a united Pakistan. While greater autonomy may be the cry in the minority provinces, the demand would always stop short of actual secession. If secession became imminent, the army would probably not have much trouble in protecting the integrity of the state—unless some major external power intervened.

That possibility, according to Ali, is the second threat. He sees it in particular in Baluchistan, where there already is a guerrilla movement that—although somewhat dormant—could get support from the Russians if they ever need to put pressure on Pakistan to protect their interests in Afghanistan. But I believe the geopolitical circumstances make

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Baluchistan's secession rather improbable. Before 1947, the Baluch land was cut up into four separate political entities: British Baluchistan, Free Baluch States, Iranian Baluchistan and the Baluch area in Afghanistan. Pakistan inherited the first and forcibly annexed the second. (The resultant Baluchistan accounts for 42 percent of Pakistan's territory but only 4 percent of its population.) The other two parts are still held by Iran and Afghanistan, and neither is likely to encourage a Baluch secessionist movement to any extreme degree, for that would be a threat to their own territorial integrity.

The members of the Baluch People's Liberation Front (BPLF) are now in camps in Afghanistan where they have so far maintained a neutral posture. Their overwhelming majority is, of course, Baluch, but some non-Baluch activists, mostly from the Pakistanis living abroad, have also joined their ranks and risen to positions of responsibility. Ali quotes one such person, Murad Khan (nee Mohammed Bhabba), to substantiate his belief that the BPLF may be against the present Pakistani state but is not against a Pakistan that would include all four nationalities.

"If for the purpose of unity with other revolutionary forces, we have to sacrifice the policy of independence, we are willing to do so," he writes. "The revolution's objective is not independence, but rather the complete transformation of the existing social and economic order.... By forming a united front with all the oppressed nationalities and classes in Pakistan, we are converting Pakistani society into an anti-imperialist front."

These are inspiring words, but somewhat confusing. They are contradicted by Selig S. Harrison, who, according to Ali, is "America's most intelligent South Asia expert. In his book, *In Afghanistan's Shadow*, Harrison quotes Murad Khan, apparently from the same March 1980 interview: "We are giving up our old idea of a federation of socialist republics in an all-Pakistan revolutionary structure, with Baluchistan in the vanguard."

Harrison adds that "increasingly, he [Murad Khan] explained, 'new developments in the region' have pointed toward the desirability of an independent Greater Buchistan that would unify the Baluch in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran."

I agree with Salman Rushdie that Tariq Ali's book is "passionate," but I don't find it "wholly convincing."

There are some unsubstantiated statements—"10,000 Pakistani prostitutes dispatched to

Ali warns of a Baluch secessionist movement.

the Gulf states," "the generals acted [in 1977] partly to preempt a coup attempt by junior officers"—for which his editors should be blamed. Ali is perceptive, especially in his discussion of Bhutto or his remarks on the failure of the left movements in Pakistan. But his predilection for overkill in rhetoric too often spoils the effect. It could have been a much better book.

C.M. Naim teaches in the Department of South Asian Languages & Civilizations, University of Chicago.

By George Robinson

Jean-Luc Godard observed that when a great motion picture becomes a box-office hit, its commercial success is "based on a misunderstanding." Ruy Guerra's *Erendira* is not a great movie, but it is interesting. The film, which started as an original screenplay before becoming two short stories ("The Incredible and Sad Tale of Innocent Erendira and Her Heartless Grandmother" and "Death Constant Beyond Love") by Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez, has been attracting considerable audiences on the strength of the kind of misunderstanding Godard had in mind.

On the simplest level, the film's publicity erroneously suggests that it is based on *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. That error indicates a larger failure of comprehension, in which Garcia Marquez' best-known book is seen as an intellectual's version of *Dynasty*, a thinking person's family "epic." This is the kind of domestication of radical material so common in interpretations of difficult works of art. By a similar process, *Erendira* becomes a "wacky" collection of Fellini-style grotesques, albeit with a dangerous sexual energy.

Indeed, when the film premiered at the New York Film Festival last fall, one critic asked Guerra about Fellini as an influence. The filmmaker shrugged off the reference. "I am always interested to see who people think I have been influenced by. It's never who I think I've been influenced by," Guerra says.

Erendira is picaresque. As such it confirms something Guerra said in an interview: he is as much influenced by what he reads as by what he has seen. Of course, it differs from the classic picaresques of the 17th century in one key detail: its protagonist is a young woman, the title character, rather than a man.

The story is simple enough: Erendira (Brazilian actress Claudia Ohana) accidentally burns down her grandmother's strange mansion in the wilderness of an unnamed Third World country. The grandmother (Irene Papas) declares, "You will never live long enough to pay me what you owe" and extracts a terrible revenge, prostituting the girl throughout the backlands of the country (a thinly disguised version of Garcia Marquez' native Colombia). During their wanderings, the duo acquires a veritable traveling circus as a retinue, in-

ART & ENTERTAINMENT



A sad tale of *Erendira*

cluding an itinerant photographer of the philosophical bent (Rufus, a French performance artist).

Two very different admirers become enthralled by Erendira's now-legendary charms. The first, Ulises (Oliver Wehe), is a willowy blond who naively desires to set

Top: Irene Papas as the grandmother; below: Erendira and her grandmother.

Erendira free from her grandmother. The other, a powerful local politician, Senator Onesimo Sanchez (Michel Lonsdale), is a realist and fatalist dying of an unknown disease that appears to

be melancholy writ large.

As in the classic picaresques, Erendira grows in wit and stature as she becomes as wily—and as cynical—as the trickster who is her captor. But in a modernist work like this the process is more ambiguous than in the humorously Hobbesian world of Lazzarillo de Tormes. We have all lost our innocence now, Guerra and Garcia Marquez seem to say, and we can see this form of exploitation for the two-edged sword it is.

Should Erendira's enslavement, which brings her grandmother wealth far beyond what she is "owed," be read as an allegory of Western industrial capitalism and the Third World? The film resists this easy reading. And Guerra's picaresque is regrettably confused.

Perhaps he and Garcia Marquez are too close to each other. They are, as Guerra points out, old friends. Perhaps they spent too long—10 years—on this project. Although Guerra denies it, he may have been too intimidated by the story to excise some of the more literary elements. (It is also useful to remember that this is the first film Guerra has made from someone else's screenplay.) Whatever the cause, *Erendira* is overloaded with literary metaphors that not only clog the narrative with undigested meanings, but also render the film's central relationships almost incoherent.

Guerra's handling of Erendira's liaisons with Ulises is a case in point. When he first tries (unsuccessfully) to carry her off, he presents her with a magical orange at whose heart is a huge diamond (which sparkles in an embarrassingly crude piece of animation). Aside from the clumsiness of the device itself, the gift is crudely literary, and Guerra's treatment of it, introducing it with a heavy-handed track-in to a close-up of the mystical fruit, merely compounds the infelicity.

Guerra makes a similarly literary choice—again, I think, a mistaken one—in the otherwise disturbing scene in which Erendira is sold to and deflowered by a local *bodega* owner. Guerra stages the scene brilliantly in a downpour, amplifying the violence of the act. Simultaneously he undercuts the potential eroticism of the scene by focusing on Ohana's face, which suddenly goes dead in a disturbingly vacant stare. Then he errs by cutting to a reverse angle that reveals what she "sees"—the apparition of a brightly colored fish, float-

ing across the ceiling.

A bigger problem is inherent in the episodic nature of the picaresque. When a narrative sprawls like this, a director must unite the episodes either stylistically, thematically or both. Guerra resolutely refuses to do so. As a result, incident crowds on incident in a seemingly haphazard jumble.

The film is strongest in bits and pieces. When elements of ritual impose themselves, Guerra's touch is sure. Ritual and myth have always been integral parts of the films, and the relationship

The film's ending saves it from allegory but sacrifices it to confusion.

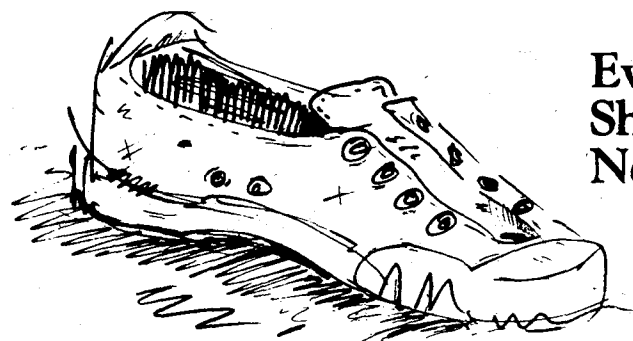
between the two women often takes on a strangely hieratic air. As Guerra says, "Relationships between people become rituals in different ways; the ritual doesn't have to be solemn, it can be very simple, very ordinary."

It can also be quite funny. One source of the film's strength is its humor, much of which comes from Papas' demented harridan of a grandmother. Guerra explains, "Irene Papas has always been identified with tragedy, she has always played tragic figures. But she has a wonderful sense of humor and I wanted to put her in a comic role. Fortunately, she knew the stories and loved them and was eager to play the grandmother." The result is a refreshing change from the brooding Mediterranean peasant women with whom Papas is strongly identified.

The film really takes off in its last half hour, when Ulises returns for Erendira and she enlists him in a plot to kill the old termagant. In a series of mishaps reminiscent of a Chuck Jones Road Runner cartoon, Ulises fails with poison and explosives. Papas reveals a surprising flair for physical comedy on the most pointedly cartoonish level. (Particularly delicious is her bewildered expression as she sits at the remains of a dynamited piano, smoke rising from her quick-fried hair, like a live-action Daffy Duck.)

When Ulises finally destroys the grandmother, it is in a crazed slow-motion frenzy of knife-wielding violence that drenches him in a spray of blue-green blood. This is an overstated color trick that anticipates the final shot of the film, Erendira's footprints in the sand turning to bright red puddles of light on an increasingly gray screen. Such images of destruction and denial indicate that the film's primary mode is a sort of bombastic irony. Senator Sanchez' dulled palate can only be reawakened from its terminal stupor by a woman who has been drugged with sensation. Erendira exploits Ulises as she is exploited by her grandmother, and his innocence is expunged under the lash of her tongue, as was her own under the heavings of the men to whom her grandmother sold her. The complexity of this final irony, both denies and complicates the film's potential political reading, saving it from allegory while sacrificing it to confusion.

George Robinson is a freelance writer based in New York and a member of the National Writers Union.



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By Michael S. Kimmel

Punk exploded in England almost a decade ago, triggered by nihilistic resignation to a world of irreconcilable class hatred and political despair. "There's no future for you!" Johnny Rotten of the Sex Pistols snarled venomously to the Queen and anyone else who would listen. "Don't know what I want, but I know how to get it.... I want to destroy," he railed over relentlessly churning guitars in "Anarchy in the U.K."

"No more heroes!" chimed the Stranglers. The Clash—claiming to be "the only band that matters"—idealized black resistance, yearned for a white riot ("a riot of my own") and were utterly bored with the U.S.A.

Now it's 1984, the year of serious discussions about "limited" nuclear devastation; of an English industrial heartland rapidly becoming a deindustrialized wasteland; of daily brutality and terror hyped around the globe.

So where are the punks now that we need them? John Lydon (formerly Johnny Rotten) spins out technically sophisticated pop minimalism, and the Clash, currently touring without co-founder Mick Jones, sound like a collegiate cover band playing all their "hits." Post-punk means commercial success. Some bands were glad to "trade politics for money," as the Clash charged.

Suddenly, though, an arresting new sound comes from a new wave of British bands, whose music is urgent and compelling and whose lyrics reveal strong political convictions. Returning to the electric guitar as their centerpiece, these bands avoid the ethereal floating synthesizer or computerized precision of techno-pop as well as the unrelenting rhythm of hard-core garage bands.

The three best purveyors of this new, positive punk hail not from England itself but from its "periphery"—Wales (the Alarm), Scotland (Big Country) and Northern Ireland (U2). Perhaps something about life on the periphery, about being marginal, creates a musical urgency best communicated by the electric guitar and encourages political sensibility untainted by the centrality of London.

Of course, cultural vitality most often lies not with the colonizer but with the colonized. One thinks immediately of gospel, jazz, reggae, the "new song" movement in Latin America and the punks themselves, who drew their energy from the increasingly marginal position of the white working class. England's slide from political and economic prominence now inspires a vibrant rebellion in its own backyard. (Each of these bands has recently released an album and an EP and plans a summer tour in the U.S.)

The Alarm.

The Alarm are visually deceptive: their uniform hairstyle is reminiscent of the Beatles' 1965 mop-tops, the Police's blond innocence or some "new romantics" (Duran Duran, Spandau Ballet) foppishly coiffed look. This Welsh band's elegantly spiked hair shoots out on top and falls straight back, making them look as if they've recently been struck by lightning—which they seem to think they have been.

As highly amplified acoustic guitars cascade behind them, the Alarm becomes a 1980s folksong army, playing the most optimistic music around. Lead singer

and composer Mike Peters offers images of people standing up for their rights, showing their strength. As he sings in "Marching On," which is on both their self-titled EP and their LP *Declaration* (I.R.S. Records): *Hear our sound/ Hear our voice/ We are growing stronger/ And we'll go marching on.*

But the Alarm is not politically naive, just angry and hopeful. They rail against war's insanity in the haunting "Third Light," asking, "Who would be a hero at the price of humanity?" Well aware of the lure of fame and success for angry political bands, they promise in "The Deceiver" to remain pure and faithful to their ideals. "If you set a standard," said guitarist/bassist Eddie MacDonald, "you've got a real responsibility...to keep those ideals together."

The Alarm's central message is hope struggling against pervasive despair and nihilistic self-destruction. "Every day they try to drag us down/ But I cry with anger I have done no crime," Peters sings in "68 Guns." "We Are the Light," an acoustic ballad, refers directly to the Sex Pistols' hopelessness when Peters sings, "There's a boy who's been told there's no future/ He's been fed by the blind."

The band's origins were similar: "We all lived in a steel town, and the jobs we thought we had were no longer there. We had a lot of time and frustration and decided to turn it into something creative."

Their most impressive song is "Blaze of Glory," which begins with a whining harmonica and lightly strummed acoustic guitar, sounding more like Neil Young

Big Country from Scotland (top), has an immediately arresting sound that weaves traditional jigs with rock; U2 from Northern Ireland expresses the agony of civil war.



MUSIC

Positive punk from the U.K.

than the Clash. Proclaiming the dignity of the disenfranchised, Peters screams himself hoarse, as if each line will be his last. He's "learning how to hit back," he rasps. But this is not a call to pick up a gun. "I'm fighting back with feeling/ I'm fighting back with love," he sings. As the tune fades out, hinting at "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," the band barely avoids lapsing into cliché as it celebrates the founding of its new republic.

Big Country.

Big Country is Scottish, and they never let you forget it. They weave Scottish themes—jigs, reels, traditional melodies—into carefully constructed rock songs, even reproducing the sound of bagpipes on their hit single, "In a Big Country." "Fields of Fire," another single from their debut *The Crossing* (Mercury Records), resembles a cross between a Highland fling and an American country hoedown, and the title track from their new EP, *Wonderland*, employs the same rhythmic progression as a dance-hall reel.

Big Country's sound is immediately arresting. The guitars of leader Stuart Adamson and

Bruce Watson strain for emotion, creating a crashing wall of sound over thickly layered drums and bass, the hallmark of whiz-kid producer Steve Lillywhite (who also produces U2).

The message is often cryptic, cynical, disillusioned. But Adamson never gives up hope, even if he is willing to limit his expectations. "I'm not expecting to grow flowers in the desert," he sings bouncily in "In a Big Country." Later he shouts, "I thought that pain and truth were things that really mattered," as if they still do. According to Adamson, the band plays "stirring spirited stuff. Music to move mountains by."

Big Country wears a bit thin after repeated listenings, however. Unlike the Alarm, for whom the music serves to convey a message, Big Country uses politics, geography and anything else they can to embellish their sound. Yet it seems like a surface artifice. Big Country's guitars ring in the ears long after whatever they are saying has faded.

U2

Perhaps the most popular Irish band since Them (which featured Van Morrison), U2 has grown up in a war zone. Their musical evolution over three studio albums and a live EP expresses the agony of civil war and hope for redemption and reunification. Like the Alarm and Big Country, the guitar occupies their musical forefront.

U2's guitarist, The Edge, plays clean rhythmic patterns, crashing through lead-singer Bono's pleading vocals or lightly leading the way through a softer instrumental bridge. Heavily layered drums provide a solid foundation that pounds upward, breaking the guitar and vocal surface. U2's sound is compelling, carried more by passion than by technical proficiency. They are not stylists—they have something urgent to sing about.

On their first record, *Boy* (Island Records), the band begins with youthful hesitance. "My body grows and grows/ It frightens me, you know," Bono sings on "Twilight." This wariness barely masks naive optimism and childish omnipotence. In "The Ocean," Bono shows his hand, confessing, "I thought the world could go far/ If they listened to what I said." As another song title suggests, this record consists of "Stories for Boys."

By *October*, their second effort, the spring of youthful optimism has dried into a bleak adolescent vision, punctuated by retreats into mysticism. The refrain of "Gloria" heralds the dawn of a new age but contradicts the brooding mood of the record. Even the titles of the songs—"I Threw a Brick Through the Window," "I Fall Down," "With a Shout," "Is That All?"—suggest the futility of individualized solutions to Ireland's recent political strife.

One song, "Rejoice," expresses U2's retreat from political impotence into mysticism. As it opens, the song seems to revel in despair. "It's falling, it's falling,

and outside the buildings are tumbling down," Bono shouts over a searing guitar. "What am I supposed to do? What am I supposed to say?" he screams, helpless and angry. "I can't change the world!" Then he spins quickly into a mystical self-aggrandizement. "But I can change the world in me! Rejoice!" Like adolescence, *October* is mercurial and confusing, both for the band and for the listener.

A machine-gun-like drum introduction followed by a piercing guitar line announces a new vision in *War*, their most recent record. The album opens with "Sunday Bloody Sunday," the same title as John Lennon's 1972 song about the Derry massacre. *I can't believe the news today/ I can't close my eyes and make it go away/ How long, how long must we sing this song?/ How long?*

War is a mature rock album by a grown-up band. Gone are the innocence, the political impotence and the retreats into mystical inner worlds. "Revolution starts at home, in your heart, in your refusal to compromise your beliefs and your values," Bono commented in a recent interview.

War has torn Ireland in two. In "Sunday Bloody Sunday" they observe "Broken bottles under children's feet/ Bodies strewn across a dead-end street." They sing about "Trenches dug within our heart/ And mother's children, brothers, sisters torn apart." And they bear the scars: "A generation without a name, ripped and torn/ Nothing to lose, nothing to gain," sings Bono in "Like a Song."

Yet under the broken glass and shattered lives lies hope for redemption. "Though torn we can be one," they counsel on "New Year's Day," another of the album's four hit singles. U2's hope for salvation rests on a heightened sense of the sacred in everyday life, renewal through Christian charity and compassion. Bono commented, "I believe it's time to fight back in your spirit—right down deep inside. There's a great faith in this group." U2 offers a hopeful vision, singing, "Wipe the tears from your eyes," (even if achieving that vision relies more, in their view, on personal saintliness than on political struggle).

Under a Blood Red Sky, their recent live mini-LP, contains concert performances of some of their best-known songs interspersed with lesser known ones, including the boldly political but musically weaker "11 O'Clock Tick Tock," their first English hit. With eight songs, this lower-priced record contains as much music as many full-priced albums. Given the quality of the production and the songs, this is a great deal. Like *War*, this record closes ambiguously with "40," which asks the same question as "Sunday Bloody Sunday" but without rancor, plaintively: "How long? To sing this song? How long?" In live performance, as the band finishes the set and leaves the stage, the audience picks up the refrain in a capella chorus, singing partly with pain, partly with hope.

Angered by the industrial crisis and false solutions that offer no future, all three bands refuse to wallow in self-pity or play music that ignores these realities. Instead, they follow Stuart Adamson's urging, as he tears into the opening bars of Big Country's album: "Come up screaming!" ■ *Michael Kimmel covers music and books from New York City.*

Fraud

Continued from page 13

Rickover is not the only one accusing the Reagan administration of covering up the case against General Dynamics. When Sen. Proxmire described his aides' meetings with Veliotis, he also blasted the Justice Department for "dragging its feet" and "mismanaging" its investigation "from beginning to end." Proxmire said top officials at Justice repeatedly spurned Veliotis' offers to talk, claiming they did not want to undermine the kickback case against the fugitive executive. But, the senator said, "I cannot understand the reluctance to do the prudent and appropriate thing even if it means admitting a mistake was made."

According to McCaffrey, Justice has now reopened its fraud investigation, and Veliotis received limited immunity in the claims case after McCaffrey's visit to Athens in May. But it's not at all certain that Veliotis could travel to the U.S. to give evidence while facing the criminal indictment in New York as well as multimillion-dollar civil suits filed against the alleged kickback scheme participants by the court-appointed trustee for the bankrupt Frigitemp Corporation. If Veliotis does make good his threat, however, somebody may be going to jail besides George C. Davis, the former Frigitemp vice president.

A source close to the investigation says one candidate may be Gordon MacDonald, an executive vice president for finance at General Dynamics. A corporate numbers man with no shipbuilding experience, MacDonald is the man Veliotis claims was brought in to run the shipyard after another general manager resigned rather than go along with the alleged fraud. He is also the company official who personally certified the corporation's claims under Public Law 85-804 and defended them in congressional hearings.

Perhaps more important is the effect Veliotis' testimony could have on the company's balance sheet. Veliotis reportedly thinks General Dynamics may have to pay almost \$1.5 billion to the government as a result of its alleged fraud. Similarly, Sen. Proxmire is fond of reminding the media that provisions in the law allow defense contractors to be excluded from future contracts in the event of fraud. Defense Department blacklisting would devastate General Dynamics, 89 percent of whose sales last year came from military business.

But this \$4 billion contractor may be too big to penalize. Although last year the Reagan administration announced with much fanfare a special anti-fraud and corruption unit to prosecute unscrupulous companies, nearly all of the 100 or so firms nailed have been small business. Besides, the Navy just announced that it expects bids from contractors on a new billion-dollar submarine program sometime after the general election, and the

bids will come from Electric Boat and only one competitor.

Don Michak is a reporter for the Valley Advocate (Springfield, Mass.).

Labor

Continued from page 2

Of course, there's nothing new about the One-on-One Program; it's how CIO was built in the '30s. In 1944, Richard Rovere noted, CIO PAC had 75,000 full-time volunteers working in Roosevelt's campaign. This spring, labor's legions for Mondale consisted largely of union staffers and paid "volunteers."

And yet, the One-on-One Program is a cautious step forward that differentiates the Kirkland presidency from George Meany's. Indeed, inasmuch as Kirkland has had to accommodate such politically active internationals as the UAW and AFSCME, the endorsement itself may have moved the Federation one step leftward, even as it has reduced the opportunity for such mavericks as Winpisinger to stray from the fold. Anyone seeking a labor movement in transition could have done worse than attend the Solidarity parade of 150,000 unionists down Market Street the day before the convention began. In its mix of hardhats, women and minorities, in its insistence on peace as well as jobs (the most commonly held sign was "Labor says, 'U.S. Out of Central America,'" quoting a passage from

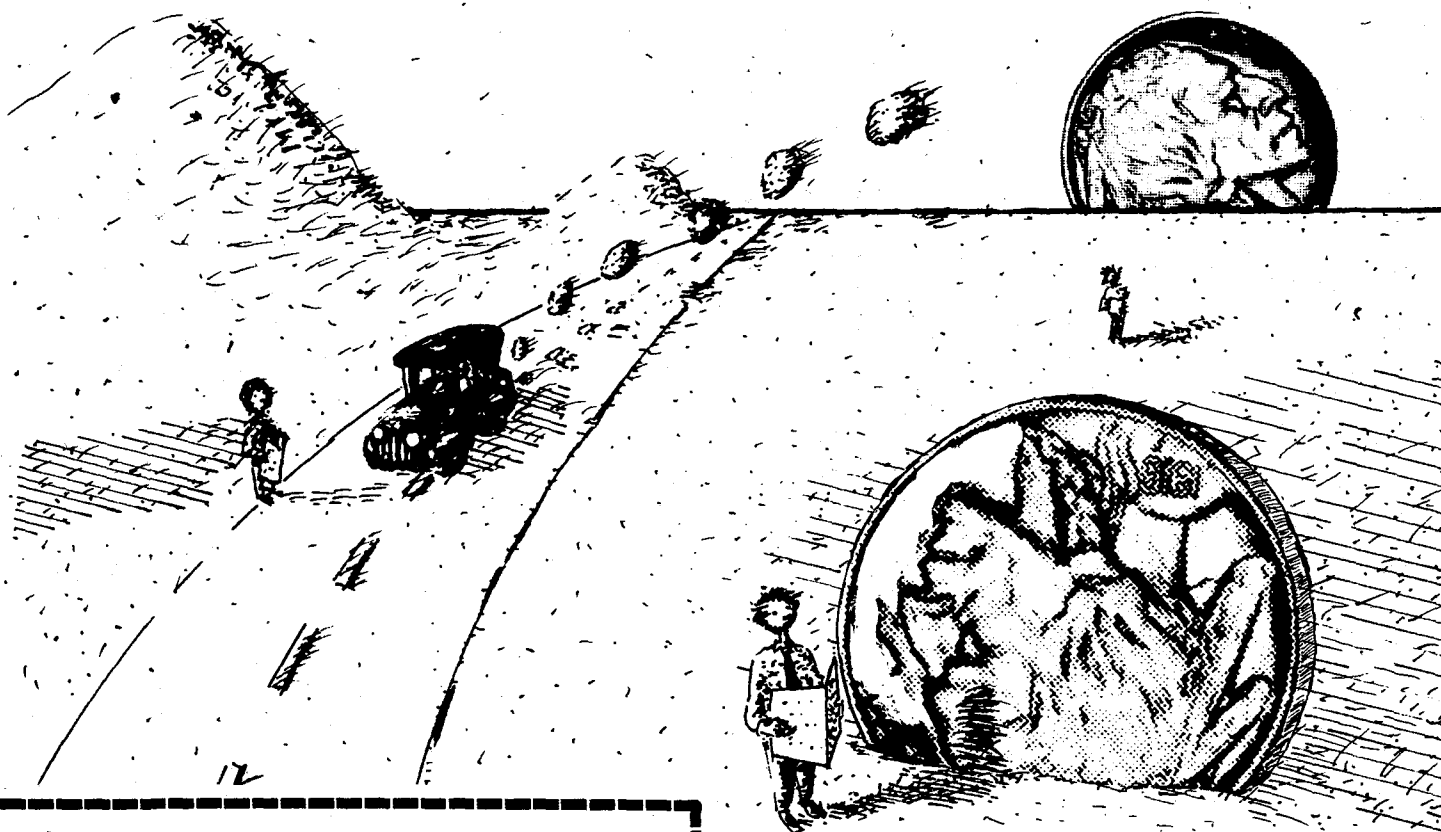
the AFL-CIO resolution on El Salvador), it reflected demographic shifts only now being registered in the movement's politics. San Francisco labor is not American labor, to be sure, but it was not entirely a function of San Francisco politics that Lane Kirkland marched just 20 feet ahead of Harry Bridges in a touring car.

The irony is that while, by choice and necessity, labor hid from public view for most of the convention, it was becoming, even at the convention, a movement more attuned to the newer social movements so prominent during the proceedings. This was a movement of building tradesmen gleeful at Mondale's selection of Geraldine Ferraro, a movement in which the three largest union delegations (NEA, AFSCME, AFT) were from public sector unions, one of which (AFSCME) favored Jackson's position over Mondale's on defense spending and another of which (the NEA) came under considerable pressure to do so. Moreover, it was a movement that left the convention unabashedly enthusiastic about its ability to win its members to the Mondale-Ferraro ticket. "We'll cut the Machinist defection rate to half the 1980 level," said Winpisinger. "We'll hold it to the 20 percent of our members who register Republican."

That, of course, is half the battle. The unions' other task is to increase their registration, which Steelworkers Vice President Leon Lynch estimated ran no higher than half of the members in his international—which itself is widely viewed as having a higher rate of registration than many of the building or service trades. Still, at its best, this has been a year of top-down revolutions that get out of hand. From Mondale's selection of Ferraro to the Jackson campaign to the AFL-CIO's endorsement and sudden plunge into the politics of One-on-One, events planned at the summits have engendered more activity at the base than anyone anticipated. If Mondale and labor are to prevail, something like that must happen this September, when long-silent stewards are sent among the members and told to talk politics.

Harold Meyerson has reported on labor in the 1984 presidential election for several periodicals. A Los Angeles-based political consultant, he is a member of the DSA National Executive Committee.

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Prairie

Continued from page 24

tine monks, the college is not too far from Lake Wobegon, that mythical place "that time forgot and the decades cannot improve."

Keillor's wit and acute sense of proportion give the two-hour broadcast its teetering field of gravity. Fake sponsors like Powdermilk Biscuits, "that give shy people the strength to do what needs to be done," and Bertha's Kitty Boutique ("for people who care about cats—have you tried Cat Cuisine Frozen Dinners that come in Vermin Alfredo or Rata-touille?") add to the program's chummy mystique. Keillor delivers his monologue, commonly known as the "News from Lake Wobegon," for 10-20 minutes. During that time an entire town of imaginary immigrants is fondly scrutinized and soaped down like a child in its Saturday-night bath. The routine gives Keillor a chance to don his fundamentalist preacher's robes and, with the sagacious vision of a master parodist, tell stories, moralize, tattle, wax philosophical or do

all four simultaneously. The best bits resemble the fiction in his best-selling book *Happy to Be Here*, and many will probably surface on his forthcoming project, a history of Lake Wobegon.

The history of the *Prairie Home* show itself may not be as poignant or skewed as the fabled Lake community, but it is nearly as colorful. "If we had to do the same show as we did 10 years ago," Keillor told the anniversary crowd, "everybody here would have to leave except for 12 people." In the beginning the show was taped at the Walker Art Center and heard only over the small MPR network. Today, through the space-age channels of satellite broadcasting, 218 public radio stations receive the program from American Public Radio.

Before finding a permanent home at St. Paul's World Theater (now being renovated for \$1.5 million), *A Prairie Home Companion* traipsed from theater to theater in the Twin Cities. Executive producer Margaret Moos and technical audio director Lynne Cruise have always kept the juice flowing, however. The show has never gone off the air, not even on its many road trips to both coasts and select hot spots around the Midwest. Long shoe-string budgets enabled the

Companion's musicians and stage hands to stay on. Today a handsome budget (\$800,000 a year) ensures that the show will go on. Cargill Inc. underwrites the program, but some of the operating costs come from the sale of *Prairie Home* merchandise. Records, pennants, bumper stickers, t-shirts advertising Powdermilk Biscuits, a tasty book by Mohr called *How to Tell a Tornado* and a collection of Lake Wobegon monologues spread over four cassettes aid not only the show but also MPR.

Keillor has had offers to take his radio success story to television, where it would be in an even higher money game, but so far he's turned thumbs down to all of them. If he has thought of making a switch, Keillor has not even hinted at it. Writing in the anniversary program as the curish Jack, of Jack's Auto Repair, the station's "oldest benefactor," Keillor notes that "radio is a wondrous medium, filled with mystery and romance. But it's also simple, and the trend, in case you didn't notice, is from the simple to the complex, from radio to television. Radio is charming, like that wonderful sound you get by slipping a piece of cardboard to the wheels of your bike, but most people wind up driving cars."

With the media making a fuss over birthday party events, Keillor still opened his monologue for the 10th anniversary in his usual mild manner: "Well, it's been a quiet week in Lake Wobegon." Nobody gets too bothered about birthdays there. Too much hubbub interferes with the growing of grains and kids, or it affects the local Whippets baseball team. Like the Benedictine monks at St. John's who really do live up where Lake Wobegon ought to be, Keillor's creation is in the world, but not of it.

As one embodiment of the American character, Lake Wobegon is a bucolic pre-industrial spot one minute and a post-VCR one-horse town the next. It is the place where romanticism and modernism do a neat little jig together for the rest of the folks on the airwaves. As an entertainment product, *A Prairie Home Companion* remains the antidote to the dynasties of TV sitcoms, soap operas and mini-series people plop in front of nightly. That's why faithful listeners still hear the big guy warbling "Hello Love" in his admittedly bad singing voice every Saturday evening before the tube goes on in the next room.

Martin Keller is an editorial consultant for the Minneapolis Twin Cities Reader.

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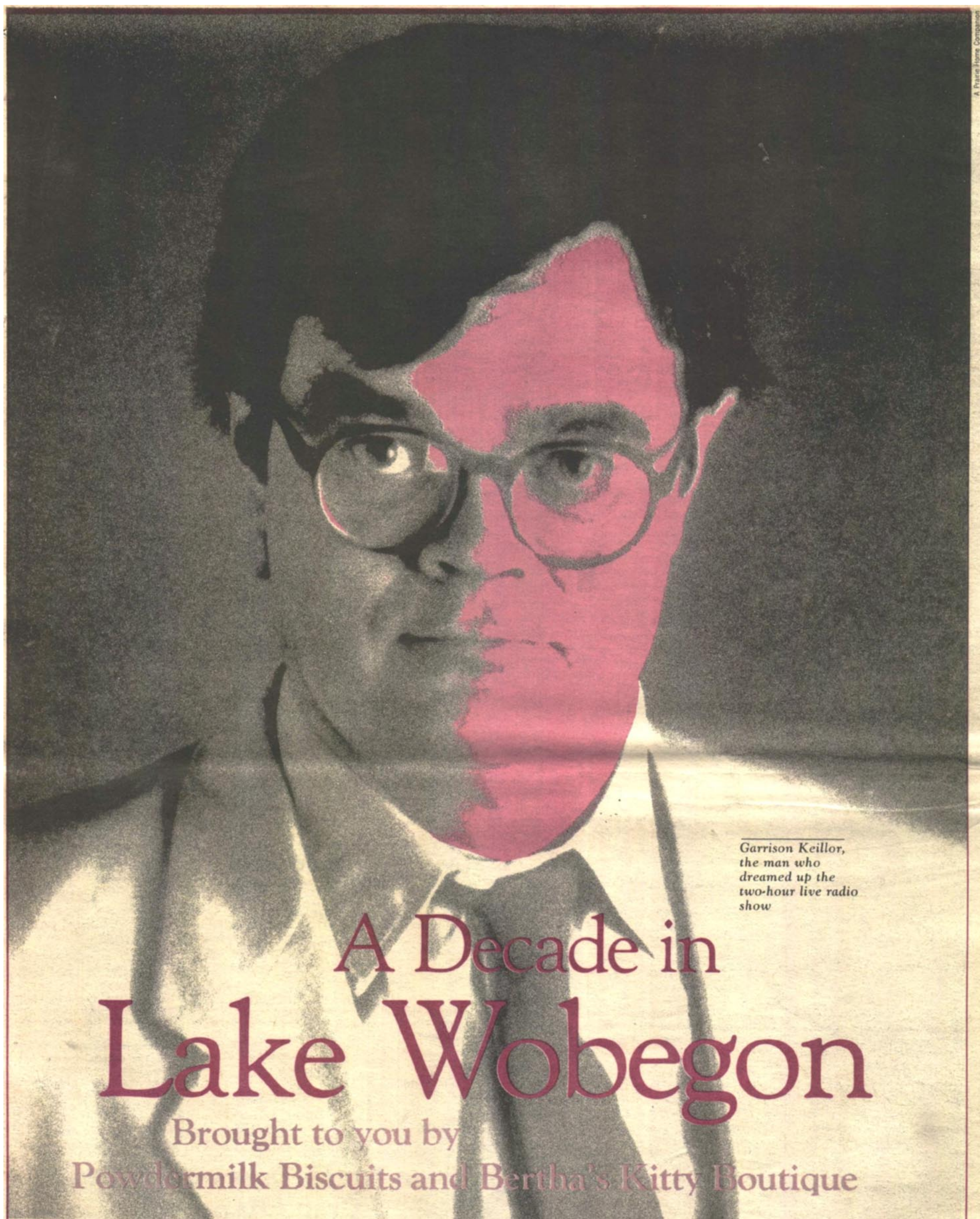
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the man who
dreamed up the
two-hour live radio
show

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By **MARTIN KELLER**

AS A TALL MAN WEARING A bemused look crooned "Hello Love" to more than two million listeners, *A Prairie Home Companion* turned 10 years old on July 7. For regulars who tune into the show's musical acts, corny jokes, ingenious put-ons and savory updates about the never-never land of Lake Wobegon, Minn., it was just another Saturday afternoon in front of the radio.

"We're a little fancier than usual," noted *Prairie Home* host, Garrison Keillor, the tall man who dreamed up the entertaining two-hour live broadcast back when live broadcasts, like ringer washing machines, were supposed to be part of

America's dusty past.

If the crowd of special guests and the small orchestra and chorus looked out of place in their ties and gowns, no one in radio-land seemed to mind or point any fingers. Beneath the expensive husk was the same old heartland fare that has brought big-city sophisticates in New York and rural folks out in Washington state together for Keillor's communal potluck. From the nation's grassroots to its skyscrapers, *A Prairie Home Companion* has changed everyone's sense of what a radio broadcast should offer.

As a product of Minnesota Public Radio (MPR), it is decidedly free of highbrow pretenses, although it is not unusual to hear Minnesota opera singer Vern Sutton engaging in some camp performances that kick the stiffness out of high culture. A showcase for Americana,

it is the place to tune in country, ragtime jazz (*Prairie Home's* house band, the Butch Thompson Trio, is a treasury of Dixie blues and jazz), bluegrass, gospel, polka and folksong—traditional and contemporary—or even a bit of mouth music and doo-wop. Queen Ida and her Cajun group, the Bon Temps Zydeco Band, have boogied on the *Companion's* stage, sometimes sharing the bill with a Klezmer combo from the Big Apple or with Stevie Beck, Queen of the Autoharp, and Western swing duo Dakota Dave Hull and Sean Blackburn from the Twin Cities. Even a bit of tapdancing has been heard on the show. Take that, Ted Mack.

A Prairie Home Companion sprung from thin air after Keillor wrote an article for the *New Yorker* about the last performance of the original Grand Ol' Opry.

Like the Opry, the *Companion* often imitates the spirit of Vaudeville. True, no clowns wield water cans, nor do big-busted women take chauvinist jokes from two-bit players. But some of the funniest, most biting satire and humor America has heard or read flows from its stage into the nation's ears. Writer Howard Blount Jr. and Minnesota's Howard Mohr, poet and pundit, have often appeared on the *Companion*, making it as funny as the '40s radio shows that preceded television. Which is not to suggest that *A Prairie Home Companion* is nostalgic.

"Nostalgia is the work of people with poor memories, I think, and for myself, the further away from the past I get, the more I like it," Keillor recently told the graduating class at St. John's University in Collegeville, Minn. Run by Benedic-

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